Un Bacio Di Tentazione

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by Aangel1

Summary

The lines of professionalism and physical attraction begin to blur as Will and Hannibal engage in a slow burn consensual erotic courtship. A series of grisly homicides sends Will down on the path of a narcissist who views him as competition for the Chesapeake Ripper's heart.

In a tale of desire, envy and obsession, just how far can jealousy push someone?

Notes

Happy Valentine's Day! This is a gift to all Fannibals but mostly to ElizaD, pterodactyl352, EarthSickWithoutYou and bigfootghostdick for being fantastic writers. Check out all each of these amazing people's work! This was mostly inspired by my love for Spanish soap operas. LOL.

Disclaimer I do not own the show nor the characters.

See the end of the work for more notes

Chapter 1

A knock caught Hannibal's attention. Checking the time, he noticed it was after his last appointment for the day. *Who would be arriving at his home during a storm* he wondered.

Opening the door, he saw Will Graham standing drenched, soaked to the bone, possibly from the rainwater still heathing its wrath. A singular slash on his shoulder glowed crimson with blood seeping from the wound. "Didn't know where else to go." Will mumbles nearly collapsing when the doctor catches him with his quick reflexes and carefully guiding him to the living room.

Lying him down to avoid further pain to his injured acquaintance, he placed Will's head onto a pillow. The dampened curls clung to the sweat soaked skin making him appear as if he had wandered for hours in the drenched rain seeking help. The doctor then places a blanket onto Will's sleeping form as if he were someone he cherished deeply. He lets him rest.

Will's blue eyes groggily opened to the faint warm glow of the sun peeking through the window. He notices he was not in his home.The decor around him signified elegance. Someone with taste.

"You were unconscious for a while."

That voice. He recognized it clearly as day. Will's focus turned to see Hannibal standing in the doorway of his bedroom. His clothing had changed to a clean white buttoned long sleeved top with pressed slacks making it seemed he had been in the kitchen when Will arrived. Rubbing his eyes from sleep he asked, "What happened?"

The doctor quietly moved towards Will sitting at the edge of the large king sized bed. "You came into my home injured. I could not leave you without tending to your wound."

"How did you do it?" Will's gaze turned to the bandaged shoulder and back to Hannibal wondering how he stitched him up without him remembering it. "Years of practice." Will's expression curiously turned at the statement. No one with Lecter's skill could miraculously heal a person's shoulder in the blink of an eye, apparently he did with an almost god-like power.

"Did you ever think of..doing things differently?"

"I enjoy my work too much. Helping people, saving lives. I am hoping there is a point to my existence, even if I am damned regardless." He was officially confused by what he was saying. Was he implying that he felt cursed? "Damned? Like..hell? Hannibal, you couldn't be damned. It's impossible."

"Are you afraid of me Will? Are you worried that I may take your life and consume your flesh?" The man shook his head. "I would like to clean up first."

“You may use the washroom. Take your time.” He said in a reassuring tone that was unusual of him. Quietly he left Will to think about what he had just witnessed. Hannibal was being courteous to him. They had not known the other for long and somehow the psychiatrist showed more respect to Will than anyone who had the pleasure of socializing with him.

Entering the washroom was like stepping into an ornate Roman villa. The marble vanity combined with the inter-cross mosaic back splash in the shower blew him away. The water cascading down his body felt divine as if a heavenly being enchanted it. When it was over, Will wrapped the towel around his waist, he exited and noticed clothing on the bed that did not belong to him.

Silk sleepwear pants in a dark navy tone along with a red cotton sweater seemed rather odd. *Was he simply doing this to appear modest or is it something else?* Will contemplated in his mind. He imagined the scrutiny if people found out he spent the night at Hannibal’s. It’d be a highly immoral scandal to his reputation let alone losing his license over a simple misunderstanding.

Walking down the stars in the attire felt even more embarrassing. He shouldn’t even be in someone else’s home, especially one as grand as Hannibal’s. “Good morning Will.”

“Morning.” he replied still unsure how everything seemed normal on the outside and not what occurred several hours earlier. The storm ceased leaving a light blanket of mist, the scent of freshly fallen rain heightened his senses.

“How are you feeling?” Hannibal asked while finishing the last minute arrangements for breakfast for his overnight guest. “Good. You didn’t have to do this for me because I unethically showed up on your doorstep, not in my right mind.”

“You had an obligation to seek medical attention. Never apologize for coming to me.” Will’s eyes traversed to the plate containing French toast dressed in the traditional technique of the French. “That smells amazing.” He took the first bite tasting the fresh succulent ripe berries coated in the syrup.

“It must have been quite some time since anyone gained the opportunity to cook for you.” Hannibal spoke in a rather open manner. He seemed amused to see a friend enjoy his company.

Once the meal was finished, the good doctor handed Will back his freshly washed and dried clothing to which the guest quietly rushed to the washroom in the master bedroom to avoid any further eye contact.

Donning into the clothing he’d worn earlier no longer drenched in rainwater, Will slowly eased down the stairs peeking behind the wall to see Hannibal engaging in conversation with a well dressed beautiful woman.

Her golden strawberry blonde hair reached the middle of her back. Her porcelain white skin seems almost translucent at points. Her down turned brown eyes would look unnatural on any individual, but to her it suited flawlessly. A rounded nose with plump lips could make a man stop in his tracks and admire her unique beauty. The woman turned from Hannibal to see Will

descending from the master bedroom. “I’m sorry for interrupting. I’m Will Graham..a f-friend of Hannibal’s”

“I did not expect my dear charming brother to house an overnight guest. I’m Mischa Lecter. His sister.” Shocking would not be the word Will is using at the moment. It was a kick to the curb.

“It’s very nice to meet you, Will. May I say you are a sight to behold. A beauty such as yours must have admirers.” Mischa teased making Will’s face slightly flushed.

“I am afraid he does not my dear sister. I offered to drive Will home if you would like.” The doctor’s maroon eyes made contact once again with him. “Y-yes, that would be fine. It was nice to meet you, Mischa.

Soon both men were out the door. The drive itself was quiet and serene. Will’s thoughts were all over the place. Being in Hannibal’s house, spending the night and sharing a meal together. They were only work colleagues..nothing more, nothing less.

Closing the door behind him, Will let out a long exhale, courtesy of the emotions building up in his brain. What was wrong with him? Why did he feel so nervous around him? *You are not falling for him! Snap out of it! If it were to happen, you’ll end up heartbroken.*

Steering the Bentley in place, Hannibal entered his home to see his sister in the kitchen with a glass of whiskey in her hand. "He’s rather handsome isn’t he? Are you certain you do not harbor romantic feelings for him?”

He was taken aback by the question. “Have you gone mad?! He is not a patient. I help him consult cases and in return I aid in his therapy. Someone will misinterpret and I could be held accountable by the medical board.”

Setting her glass down, Mischa asked, “Why are you hiding my dear brother? Is it because you use your skills of seduction to conceal the pain? Or is it because of Will?”

“I do not know. For so long, I have been alone. Unworthy of trust and indulging in pleasure that does not soothe the ache of my heart. Until I met him. He sees me as I am.”

His sibling’s expression changed to a smile of happiness. Reaching over, she squeezed his hand in comfort. “It will come. You deserve happiness.”

Later that evening, Will was spending time with his pack when his phone began to ring. He didn’t recognize the number yet answered without giving it a second thought. “Hello?”

“Will? It’s Mischa, we met earlier today.”

“Yeah, hi. I wasn’t expecting you to call. How are you liking Baltimore?”

“It’s quite splendid for a city. By the way..do you have plans for this weekend?” From the change in her voice, Will only knew one thing came to mind. “N-no, why?”

“The Baltimore Opera house is hosting *La Boheme* this Saturday. Would you care to join us? I understand if you prefer not to attend." He took a few minutes to completely understand what she was asking. *Was Hannibal going? If I do go..what am I going to wear?”*

“I’ll go but only if you promise to keep my attendance a secret."

“You have my word.”

“I know what I am expected to do. You will take what I select, try it and impress yourself.” Will followed Mischa through several racks of high quality clothing. “We’re doing this Dolce for you.” She handed him a dark midnight trench coat which Will found quite nice.

“And shoes.” The young woman gravitated towards the rows of refined shoe wear for her new friend. “Canelli. Michael Kors.”

“Wow.” Will muttered as the pile kept getting bigger and bigger with each item. She pulled a opulent messenger bag with a logo of blue, white and red. “Tommy Hilfiger. Love that. Okay, Tom Ford, this we love.” Pressing a well double split tooth sports jacket against his frame, she quickly glanced at his frame and said, “Uh, it might fit. It might.”

“What?”

"Okay, Armani. You’re in desperate need of Armani. Shall we?” Will enthusiastically rolled his eyes and followed her as they continued their spree. His arms ached from carrying the bags of his new wardrobe, storing them in his closet and collapsed into the bed with a content sigh.

The mere feeling of lying in Hannibal’s bed felt forbidden and so good at the same time. He should not feel these emotions at all. It was simply a mere friendship. Nothing at all. Yet it felt nice that he did those things for him because he wanted to.

A man like Hannibal should be with someone like Alana. Someone who is beautiful and normal. Not someone who catches serial killers, fixes motor boats and takes care of stray dogs. Not someone like Will.

By the time morning came around, Will with energy he did not possess leapt out of bed. Winston looked particularly curious wanting to know what exactly had his master running out the house like an excited pup.

His students focused their eyes not on the case but on him. He was dressed more refined than what he had worn before. Mismatched bits gave way to patterns, every stitch molded to his body with precise precision. He was something out of one of those sultry cologne advertisements filled with dim lights and gorgeous women caressing his body. Will noticed the attention was solely on him, ignoring the gruesome details of the killing and stopped his lecture mid way to see what the fuss was about.

“I understand the topic of conversation is me. Anyone care to share their thoughts?” A female raised her hand and asked, “Did you upgrade your wardrobe?”

“Yes. A friend of mine took me shopping. She has a keen eye.” Another hand rose and then another. Before he knew it, all of his students were asking questions all at once. From the material to the brand to who the mysterious person was that had such an expertise in transforming the cute hermit into an attractive professor.

It was Mischa who arrived to pick him up from work. He knew there were eyes on him and whispering who the beautiful woman behind the Jaguar was. Arriving at his house, Will and Mischa took up conversation in the living room while the dogs nestled up on each other except for Winston who glued himself in between them.

“It seems my brother has taken a liking to you.”

Will gulped nervously. “He does not. Isn’t he with Alana?”

“It was in the past. I am more curious to know what it is about you that has my brother so captivated. Apart from your pretty face that is.”

He brushed off like it was nothing. “Be serious Mischa. I am not that good-looking and besides why would Hannibal be interested in me of all people? A woman like Margot would’ve suited him..not some rugged loner like me.”

She placed her hand atop his, showing comfort to the situation at hand. “He sees something truly beautiful. Something that intertwines divinity and darkness together into one cohesive entity. You are his destiny, Will.”

“Even if he and I did make this work. He’ll grow tired of me, discard me and have someone more affirmative to his taste.” Mischa disagreed with the idea. “Can’t you tell by the way he looks at you? A man such as you would certainly want to imagine what it would be like to be the one that has stolen Hannibal Lecter’s heart.”

He carefully envisioned it. Being desired by Hannibal, bedding down with Hannibal. Receiving care and love from someone who should not be with a commoner like him. Yet it still pains him to know what will eventually happen if whatever was going between them came true.

The young lady reached into her bag and pulled a rectangle medium sized red box, handing it to Will whose expression deemed surprised at this unusual gift. The cursive logo signified wealth of the highest status. He opened it seeing a well crafted exclusively detailed bracelet brimming with shades of gold and the other was something so ornate that it felt it had taken hours of delicate hands to shape these creations in his hands.

“They’re from Hannibal.” Will shook his head handing the box back to Mischa but she held it back to him. “If you do not accept them, he will know and trust me when I say so. He has grown fond of you, Will.”

The man hesitated to understand Hannibal's message through the jewelry Whatever it was, it drew him in like a siren tempting weary sailors on the sea.

“I have your tuxedo ready hanging in the closet and it's tailored. Now, come on.” She hauls him up and stays outside his bedroom eagerly awaiting to see how her work pays off.

Baltimore Opera House

Dr Lecter held onto his flute of champagne while discussing a conversation with several members of elite status. He placed the empty glass on a fellow servant as they slew by.

His sister approached out of thin air to say hello to him. He praised her appearance in the radiant gray silk sleeveless faux wrap dress decorated with seed beads with a stitched purple silk sash. Her golden crown of hair inverted into a french braid highlighted the near angelic beauty she obtained.

Hannibal soon caught the silhouette of someone hiding behind Mischa. There was something familiar about him. Was this person her companion for the evening? He did not know until she stood to the side and revealed her surprise.

It was Will. There were no words to describe what Hannibal was feeling. Time seemed to move so slowly all at once. The only sound he could hear was his heart beating with Will's in unison.

“Oh, Hannibal, isn’t he a vision?” His sister spoke with adoration at seeing her older brother become enamored with someone whose inner turmoil and beauty entangled his heart so tightly he could not breathe.

Will ducked his head downwards to avoid seeing Hannibal’s eyes on him, admiring him in the tux and how well he looked in it. He just wanted to look at his pretty face was the only answer he could think of.

“I did not expect to see you here, Will. Did you enjoy the performance?” The other man struggled to form words or even a single sentence to the handsome doctor. “I-I thought it was magnificent.” He cleared his throat in embarrassment. He felt a slight push and noticed out of the corner of his eye was Mischa. Her eyes sparkled at seeing her brother with Will and whatever the outcome after tonight held, she supported them one hundred percent.

Hannibal guided Will through conversations with other members of Baltimore’s elite social circles. They were taken aback but nevertheless intrigued at seeing such a beautiful man whose face was carved by Michelangelo and form painted by Botticelli on the arm of Baltimore’s most eligible bachelor. Will felt pressure to back out and leave but could not bring himself to do so in fear of ruining the night. The splendid evening came to an end when the Bentley parked in front of Will’s house.

Reaching the front door, Will whispered, “Thank you” and turning his back. Reaching into his pocket for the key, he paused to collect his thoughts and think very hard on what he

wanted. *Fuck it*. *I know exactly what I want.*

Waltzing up to Hannibal, he gripped the lapels of his coat and pressed his mouth to the doctor's who stood shocked for a moment but quietly reciprocated back. Their lips moved slightly, giving Hannibal the opportunity to cradle and cup Will's cheek with a fragile delicate touch.

They parted yet remained fairly close to doing it once more. Will's blue-green orbs centered themselves onto dark devilish maroon irises that held destruction and passion steep latching onto his soul creating a mark of ownership.

He feels warm. Maybe it was because he crossed a line with Hannibal breaking every single code of conduct, to which neither Will nor the well respected psychiatrist had ever followed. "I'm sorry. I don't know what came over me." Turning his head to the side, Will shield his expression away. The doctor curled his fingers underneath Will's chin coxing him to gaze into those irresistible eyes.

"Embrace your desires, Will." He said in that rich silky tone. It should be forbidden for a voice such as Hannibal's to exist. Elegant, graceful and seductive to subdue a person to submit.

Will felt his cheeks flushed being in Hannibal's embrace. His pulse beating cohesively, in tune with the doctor's own. A haunting melody of loss, love and mortality intertwined with an all consuming hunger.

"The Earth's a savage garden. A pleasure we can both share. I would like to court you. All you have to do is nod that beautiful head of yours and say yes."

He was everything Will should stay away from. Dr. Lecter could have chosen anyone in the world to be his companion heart. He selected *him*. Not just for his mind, nor his looks. Simply for the animal resting within eagerly awaiting a taste of the hunt to come.

"Yes" The older gentlemen ever so casually raised Will's hand to his lips and planted a gentle kiss on his knuckles as a sign of respect and intimacy reserved only for them.They bid each other farewell. For the first time in his life, Will was seen.

Chapter 2

The faint rays of sunlight crept through landing on the sleeping man nestled in bed surrounded by seven furry canines. Winston gave a soft *woof* to wake his owner up from his slumber.

Will blinked his eyes for a few minutes to let his vision clear up from the semi induced sleep he gained after Hannibal left. A quick shower helped a little to bring his thoughts clamoring into one big question mark. *Why did he kiss him? The lines they've crossed were questionable but this was one step too far!*

Letting the dogs out to frolic in the yard while Will stayed on the porch feeling the energy of the previous night lingering where he stood.

Feeling his calloused hands on his face, igniting his skin with such tenderness, it felt good. To be loved by someone with every fiber of their soul until all of the senses were filled with only them brought a slight flush to Will's face.

It never occurred to him expressing his hidden feelings for anyone..let alone someone as elegant and poise as Hannibal Lecter. He never fully understood what emotions were simmering with each encounter they've had so far. Until last night.

A car rolled up in the driveway alerting the man. An older woman stepped out. She retained some youth but still carried experience of wisdom and her hair shortened and grew through with age as smooth as wine. Delilah climbed the steps and embraced Will with the love she had. Her son hugged her back with the same mannerism.

"Hi, Mom."

"Hey sweetheart. Long time no see huh? Tell me everything." She followed her child into the house she resided in so many years ago.

Delilah took in every single detail with precise precision. A lot has changed since she last stepped foot in Wolf Trap. Her only child had sprung from a shy odd boy to a handsome lad. She raised him all on her own since he was born. It was tougher back then for a single mom but Layla never once gave up on showing Will that determination and dreams could get him somewhere. The day he was asked by the FBI nearly made her shed a tear. It had taken a long road to understand the gift he obtained. It frightened the woman at first but knew that getting into the minds of serial killers, dissecting and peeling back their motive to uncover the depravity within often took a tremendous amount of restraint.

"Is there a special someone in your life? Is his last name Lecter?" Will froze. How did she know? What could she see in his eyes that can make her ask a question like that?

"I'm your mother and a human rights lawyer. I can tell when something is different. Plus I can also see you're wearing a very expensive Hermes bracelet." Her eyebrow arched in her son's direction making her statement clear and valid.

He shrugged and stammered, “W-we were just friends. That’s it.”

“Uh-huh, then why do I notice the flush on your face just now?”

“Promise me that you'll hold judgment until I am done explaining everything that happened the last twenty four hours?”

“Cross my heart. Fire away.”

Taking a huge inhale and letting out a sigh, the profiler began to fill in the details as his mother observed. “...then we kissed..well I kissed him…so yeah.” Will’s eyes quickly dashed downward to avoid the incoming inferno, it was the exact opposite. “Oh honey. It sounds like you *admire* him more than a friend. I do have to admit that a man who’s a psychiatrist and can wear a three piece suit effortlessly has my blessing to court my son.”

“Mom!” Will groaned burying his face in his hands while ignoring her scenario on how it would happen. They begin to continue the conversation but manage to keep it mostly on Hannibal which he hoped she would not bring up again yet here she was trying to figure out a well devised plan.

“I just feel like I may not be enough for him. Plain and weird and not to mention a guy who catches serial killers. I’d be the laughing stock if I were seen in public with him. It would tarnish his reputation.”

“To hell with the gold diggers! You are personal and perfect. A terrific fisherman and a well attractive empath who snagged the heart of Baltimore’s most eligible bachelor. Can’t wait to see the faces of the suckers when they see my baby on Dr Lecter’s arm.” She hugged him in an embrace of support.

He offered to drop her off at the hotel she’s staying in. She had been surprised at how far he had come, knowing there was more to come should he allow himself to go after what he wants.

On the ride home, Will’s thoughts kept coming back to the previous night:

Being in Hannibal’s arms. Kissing him with all the pent up tension he had built up inside since they met. It felt immoral and so good to give in to those prohibited urges. He’d never kissed a man before and he was proven wrong on how amazing it felt. They were from different worlds. One was raised in the highest inner circle of society filled with privilege and power. The other grew as an outcast, cared for by an unwed woman and whose inner turmoil, mostly his social background and class, would be considered unacceptable.

Sensing an awakening, Will turned his car around, reversing it and drove in the opposite direction heading into town. Parking in front of the building that held Hannibal’s office, he quietly walked up the steps and headed inside.

Standing in front of the door that was the key to unlocking his heart, Will let his back face it and waited. It seemed like forever until he heard a voice. A voice he secretly wanted to say

his name over and over until it was the only name left on his lips. “Hello, Will”

Turning around to face him, Will stared at him for a few moments before walking silently past him. Closing and locking the door behind them, Hannibal seemed surprised at seeing Will arrive unannounced in his office. “Is everything all right?”

He had noticed Will slouching forward, elbows on his knees and his palms shielding his face. Kneeling down, the psychiatrist gently lowered and pried away those hands to see what had upset him.

Will slowly raised his head to meet Hannibal’s gaze. His blue-green eyes were reflecting a sense of dilation in how close the other man was. There was something else concealed and he needed permission to determine its source in order to fully understand the situation.

“What happened last night, I have not done it with a man before and I know that sounds odd coming from someone who’s ‘unstable’ to even have some kind of relationship and always end up being rejected because of it. You deserve someone who is normal and attractive enough to be worthy of your respect. Not some guy who prefers the company of seven dogs and lives alone.”

The older man carefully placed his palm on Will’s cheek feeling the blood elevate slightly which caused the skin underneath to flush a light shade of rosy pink. He looked so beautiful. Eyes rich as the Circasasian sea, an ivory complexion matte to marble, delicate cheekbones and lips that were full and the perfect shape to be kissed. This fragile man had bewitched him body and soul to the end of no return.

“Your mere presence comforts me Will. Suffice to say I have grown rather fond of you. It has been quite some time since I opened my heart to another and you are my salvation.”

Will’s hand carefully reached out sensually gripped the end of Hannibal’s tie and pulled him even closer to where their mouths were mere inches from the other. He whispered, "I won't be shared." while gazing into Hannibal's eyes. The taller man felt the tension in the air become warm. The gentle and delicate aura of space grew ripe with something forbidden. He replied with, "I'm not in the habit of sharing what is precious to me."

Hannibal’s interest in the perfection of the arts were merely a chalice to what was in front of him. There were so many things he could show him only if he consented to explore those dark ravenous impulses the beast within him deliciously craved. Will was not conceived to live among such mere humans who could taint such beauty.

“I won’t share you either. You may not sleep with anyone else. Even when I’m still...deciding.” Will’s eyes converted to Hannibal’s lips then his eyes and back to his lips again. He could feel his heart beating faster, his mind telling him to not give in but at this moment, he did not care at all. The desperation of desire was too much to turn back.

Hannibal lightly connected his lips to Will’s before retreating to see his reaction. Will’s emotions were tethering on the edge of exploding. Might as well let the bottle be shattered. He returned the kiss with a hunger associated with wanting to be one with him. Their lips moved roughly against each other and it wasn’t enough. Will’s hand buried itself in

Hannibal's hair scraping softly causing him to lightly growl in his throat at the slight pleasure of being the one to give Will the ability to choose what he truly wants.

The need for air would ultimately cease the fire brewing between them for now.

All of Will's shyness, his timidity, seemed to vanish leaving a glowing ember deep within that was now being stoked into a full flame. A flame that rapidly spread through every nerve ending in his body. The tiny sparks in the room created by their bodies magnified tenfold.

"What an insatiable creature you are. It will be difficult to keep myself in control but you wield a force that binds our souls too impenetrable to part. I will move heaven and earth to keep you safe." The psychiatrist sensually whispered in his lamb's ear and Will shuddered as a sign of enjoying what his Ripper was doing to him.

Dr Lecter rose to his feet tucking his attire into place. He wanted to lose himself in his passion for Will and knew it crossed the line of professionalism. He never was one to follow the rules nor was the man sitting in his office whom he wanted to have as his companion, a prodigy and as a lover.

Will stayed still. His cheeks were still flushed, his head thrown back against the cool leather of the seat and his flannel shirt in slight disarray due to kissing his not-really-psychiatrist not once but twice. He really should not have done that and he did not want it to stop. Ever.

The profiler gathered himself before straightening himself to lessen the cords of his mind. "I'd like to resume my therapy." He said to Hannibal with a softness that seemed well adjusted but contained the frivolous need to want more than an acquaintanceship. He wanted to be loved, be desired, and treasured beyond the ways of the flesh. It seemed like a preposterous ideology to possess something so far out of reach and have it much closer than one realizes sent shivers down Will's spine.

"Where shall we begin?"

Time previously did not exist in Will's often fragile mind. All of the noises of the outside perished every moment he stepped inside Hannibal's office. He felt secure, protected and wanted in Hannibal's domain; a realm of the beautiful and deadly. This world is filled with the promise of sensual paradise, a magnetic underworld filled with sin and danger lurking around every corner.

His memory flashed back to the previous day. Meeting Mischa. She was so hypnotic. Her charm put Will off guard by how radiant and lethal she could be. What about the rest of the family? Did they too harbor the unique gifts that made them so alluring and menacing? Guess he'll have to meet them soon.

"Will?" The younger man's eyes were immobile but quickly reverted to tuck away the dream for safekeeping. "Yes?"

"If you are feeling tired, perhaps it is best to continue tomorrow."

Collecting his coat, Will made it to the door, not noticing Hannibal standing behind him, leaning down to whisper in his ear once again. “I would like to court you. If it is not what you want, I shall leave you in peace. I will wait for you. The decision is yours.”

He turned his head to the side, answering “Yes" to Hannibal’s request without giving it a second thought. For too long, he had suppressed feelings for his so-called ‘friend’. Days and nights working and consulting on cases as well his own consciousness being dissembled piece by piece by him. In return, he granted permission into his world. One filled with everything he could be. And right in the middle he discovered a temptation. The most dangerous of all. An entity with the face of a heavenly divine being with the power to entrance with a few phrases and a glance.

Hearing him made the older gentleman’s hand slither down Will’s arm with a light caress ending in joining their hands together. He placed a barely there imprint of his mark on the inside of his wrist. Instead of a scorching inferno, it felt like a tender embrace.

Hannibal was not playing fair. Envied by some who ache for his position. Lusted by others who simply want to bed him and gossip about it afterwards. Will spoke from a few encounters that were quick and devoid of the self all consuming flames of love. He felt like a hollow shell but now he is quietly becoming what he had always known. A companion to a god who brings death to those deserving of their punishment. A soul whose heart once blackened had mellowed due to this enticing seductive nymph who could choose any human or god yet he picked *him*.

I found the devil. I found him in a lover. Will’s heart became fulfilled at the idea of being with the Chesapeake Ripper. Hunting for prey with calculated steps, break down their guard, ambush at the exact moment of vulnerability and consume the meal followed by rounds of delicious and intense fornicating bathed in blood. *The devil has met his match*.

The psychiatrist quietly opened the door stepping aside for his friend to exit the office as he followed. Before Will got into his car, Hannibal caught his hand so effortlessly, raised it to his lips and kissed the knuckles with a phantom- like claim while looking into his eyes with a calm tenderness the profiler had never seen made it seem he was the only one in the room.

“Sleep well mylimasis.”

“Good night.”

One month later

Quantico

A stack of files slammed on the desk startled Will who noticed Beverly with a look of a ‘finally you’re awake’ moment. “Did you get any sleep at all last night?” He rubbed his eyes while still having some energy to answer her question. “Yeah, just catching a few extra minutes. Why do you ask?”

“Well for starters, your wardrobe is updated from what you normally wear. Second, you've been spending more time with Hannibal and lastly.. not that it’s any of my concern, what is going on between you two?”

Keeping a low profile these past few weeks was a challenge. No one suspected not even Jack except for Beverly who began to take notice of her friend’s strange behavior. He was caught red handed. Standing up, he walked around his desk to face her. His eyes looked both ways before whispering, “You can’t tell anyone yet. If Freddie gets a hold of this, who knows what that would do for Hannibal’s reputation. It would ruin him.”

“So you’re saying if Miss Gossip Girl finds out about your ongoing liaison with Doctor Hottie..it would tarnish his image? I’m more worried for you. What about that weird cheese guy? Franko-something. Doesn’t he have an obsession with your boyfriend?”

“Franklyn? Yeah he does. We’re not a couple..not yet at least. He’s been raised with a silver spoon and has an inheritance that would make even admirers of the Royal Family want to marry him. What kind of man with a life like that would date a plain boring freak?”

Beverly looked shocked combined with fierceness at her friend’s revelation. “Look, I may not know you or your knight in shining armor to the point of being well acquainted but I can see there’s a spark and who cares what everyone else thinks? It’s the twenty first century for fuck’s sake! It’s *your* love life, not theirs. Well done Graham.” She playfully jabbed her elbow at her friend teasing him for his latest interaction with the most beautiful man to ever walk the halls of the Behavioral Science Unit.

Suddenly, a man wearing a UPS uniform carrying a box of some kind alerts the duo. “I’ve got a package for Will Graham?” Will raised his hand pointing the delivery guy in his direction saying, “That’s me.”

When the man left, Will placed it on the desk while Bev stood there mouthing the words, “Open it.” He was hesitant. Afraid to see what was inside, he carefully lifted the lid with a finger and saw the surprise. There were three well encased objects covered in light brown wrapping paper tied with a perfect twined bow.

Unwrapping all three with the delicacy he did not have, Will uncovered what they were and he swallowed thickly, his palms felt clammy and his skin started to warm. Beverly picked them up, gently browsing through each page and placing them back on the desk with caution.

“*The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde. *Delta of Venus* by Anais Nin and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by D.H. Lawrence. All written by people who embraced and revolutionized erotica before E.L James squandered it with cringe smut that made me barf when I read it. Your boyfriend has good taste. Gonna read them after work?”

Will’s face flustered once again at the question his friend was asking. He stammered to get the words out, “N-no. I can’t accept this gift from Hannibal. This is too much, I have to return to him.”

“Why are you so sheltered? Be grateful that someone cares about you. Where else are you going to find someone who’s willing to bend the rules, insanely attractive, not to mention a Count and a member of a noble bloodline who’s like freaking royalty? Once in a lifetime”

He muttered, “That’s true. Like I said, even if a relationship between us somehow works, it’s going to fade out. He’ll get bored and move on to someone who’s wealthy and worth his time.”

The woman grabbed his knapsack, tossing it and Will caught it, “You are going to go home, call him and ask if you want to have dinner with him tonight .”

“Fine. My expectations will be lowered. You get to dog sit the pack. If I’m dead by tomorrow, you know what to do.” Will said while walking away. She joked humorously “If you get laid by Hannibal and live. Invite me to the wedding.”

Hannibal’s office

A bottle of Chianti stood opposed to a near finished glass. Dr Lecter’s eyes kept wandering to his notes. More specifically what laid underneath. A sketch drawn from memory. He does not remember why he drew it but it gave an aura of peace to what transpired just the day before.

He did not anticipate his dear friend to harbor feelings of love toward him. He’s had dalliances before. His affair with Alana was simply what it was. A distraction. They parted ways there after but remained in contact.

Crossing paths with Will Graham and developing emotions in a more intimate manner if it were in a different scenario would have seen the end of his career. It was not. It felt exhilarating, wild and forbidden to share thoughts with someone equal to him. His job was terror filled with the worst of humanity. It often made Will ill at having to do so but it also awakened something primal. A beast who tasted foul blood awaiting its first hunt. To sink its teeth into supple succulent flesh fit for a king.

He pinned for more than a mere platonic friendship. The psychiatrist ached to touch, bite and play his body as he deserves to be. Cherished beyond his imagination. A queen at his side.

The ringing of the phone tore Hannibal out of his dream. Glancing down he saw the caller ID. It was *him*. “Hello Will. I was not expecting you to call. Is there something wrong? Are you hurt?”

“No, no. I’m okay. I wanted to thank you for helping me with the case. And I was wondering if I can come by for dinner tonight? I understand if you prefer to be a- ”

“I have no plans for the rest of the evening. You are welcome to come by. I shall see you in an hour.”

Wolf Trap, Virginia

Will took one final glance in the mirror. He stood in his bedroom taking in his appearance. He wanted him to be surprised when he sees him. What will occur on this night cannot be undone.

Texting Beverly and letting her know where he was headed had the profiler nervous as a schoolboy. It was a dinner between friends. Why is he making this a big deal? Maybe it's because he is going through a major sexuality crisis.

It was not that Will found Hannibal attractive. He is inhumanly gorgeous. No one at his age should, he surpassed it. He often wondered why a well respected doctor would spend all his time with a man far beneath in the social ladder. It would ignite rumors, envy from all corners.

God, what was he even doing? He should have been at home with his dogs instead of driving to have dinner with a man so far out of his league. They were from opposite sides of the tracks. By some magnetic force, they were entranced with the other. An unexplained bond that should not exist in the world. A connection born out of blood, desire and the macabre aroma of death.

He and Hannibal saved Abigail's life. She returned the favor by wanting Hannibal to be her guardian. He was not the most suitable choice to care for a young lady but given his charming demeanor to entice, he was granted permission. It felt strange to see him interacting with a girl who lost her mother at the hands of her maddening father. She brought love but also horror in the Minnesota Shrike. She adapted to her surroundings quite well. Enjoyed spending time with both her surrogate fathers who she both loved for rescuing her but also teaching her the ways to use the skills as a huntress to never harm a living animal for pleasure, only to inflict pain on those who do.

The house came into his view as he parked his Volvo next to the sleek dark Bentley. It was massive for a man who once was an emergency surgeon now practicing delving into the minds of others with intricate persuasion. He opened the driver's side grabbing his coat and walked up the steps, getting closer and closer to the door.

His throat suddenly became tight. He couldn't breathe. *If I leave now, he's going to think I'm an idiot and send me to another doctor who's probably going to be unhelpful regardless.*

No one saw him the way Hannibal did. He understood what it means to feel different whether normal or on the verge of losing one's sanity. The one thing he secretly wanted was someone to accept all of him. Both the man and the monster equally. He felt stupid for pretending he never was interested in Hannibal in a romantic way nor he will not deny fantasizing about him.

The image of being bedded by such an intimidating apex predator bowing in submission not to be wrongfully humiliated but to be worshiped in all his glory felt so delicious. It made Will's mouth water in wanting to mark Hannibal as his own so that everyone can see who he belongs to. A brand to solidify his status as his equal.

There were three things Will was absolutely positive: First, Hannibal was a killer. Second, he did not know how dominant that part may be that ached for him and third, he was unconditionally and irrevocably in love with him.

He has an opportunity to be everything Hannibal wants. He was going to take it and embrace the all darkness, the sweltering passion and the call of the lamb took over his body waiting to hunt the lion. Love the predator with his body and soul to intertwine for eternity.

The doorbell rang alerting the occupant inside to see who was on the other side. A few moments ticked by with slow suspension. It opened with a faint light illuminating the doorway and a voice he knew all too well said, “Hello Will.”

Chapter 3

Hannibal's home

The faint melodious aria of Mozart's *Lacrimosa* flowed effortlessly in the background as the doctor finished assembling the table. He was an individual with refined taste for the rare objects in life. Only a few worthy of his admiration were given the threshold to step into his world of eccentric elusiveness and captivation.

The light chime of the bell made his eyes turn to the door. Waltzing with his usual gracefulness, he opened to see a creature of timeless youth. He was well dressed with hair styled with a single curl, pants to accentuate a lithe form and the top was a bold choice. A soft salmon pink that highlighted the color in his cheeks. It must have been from the cold but Hannibal knew right away what it meant.

"Good evening, Will. Please come in." He stepped aside allowing his guest to enter. Will's eyes absorbed every tiny detail. The decor was wildly ostentatious in its design. Hannibal seemed more interested in beauty at its core; From his house, his clothing and his life all symbolize a man of pristine character that some would beg to know the secret to how he has achieved it.

Will knew the answer. Money. Inherited from a dynasty that has nearly faded from the pages of history but carefully pulled itself from the abyss to place its mark on the powerful and glittering realm of the elite.

He followed his host to the dining room and took in the table setting. Two burgundy candlesticks were barely flickered meaning they were just lit up. Two plates of delicious looking food sat next to the other making the room feel intimate and inviting. "Braised lamb shanks with lemon confit and pearl onions. Bon appetit."

The flavor of the 'meat' did not bother Will's taste buds, it opened them up to adhere the sweetness of the lemon and the mildness of the onions were a perfect combination but Hannibal transformed it to a prestige dish that professional chefs would struggle to recreate with their own ingredients.

"Was the main course to your liking?"

"Yes. It was. Thank you." Hannibal felt his heart jump a little in seeing Will in his home, enjoying a meal with him and appreciating the presence of another. "Feel free to explore my home while I clean up."

"I can help if you'd like."

"It's all right. Will, you're my guest. It is the least I could do for you."

The younger man stood for a few minutes. He seemed curious as to why Hannibal was being so polite to him. *Probably a European custom.* Moving from the dining area, he wandered

slowly taking in the comfortableness of the fireplace. The hearth may look out of place in another home but in Hannibal's, it belongs there.

His mind kept coming back on the Ripper. *His* Ripper. A being neither angel nor devil but something in between. An artist whose creations test the very boundaries of the minds of men. The kills were not to instill fear but to dazzle with its bizarre artistic creativity to someone who could see past the brutality and witness something uniquely beautiful. That person was Will.

The connection is carefully forming. A cocoon metamorphosing biding its time to shift, morph until it hatches out of the shell. For now, it will continue its slumber.

Silent steps were approaching yet he did not cower in fear. He felt a firm hand on his shoulder. "Did you enjoy your gift?"

Will froze when Hannibal said a gift. Was he referring to the three novels that were filled with such sensual wording that it almost made him hardened with arousal when he read a few pages before arriving. Maybe it wasn't a good idea considering he showed up looking like a snack for a dinner between friends. Not to mention the obvious close proximity and often more than platonic mannerisms that has shown up on more than one occasion.

The younger man could only answer with a slow nod. "How did you manage to find first edition copies? It had to have cost a fortune."

"I admire beauty in all forms. Have you chosen a favorite?"

"Dorian Grey is a complex character. Battling with his impulses tracing to an ill childhood. Selling his soul to maintain his youth and the portrait reveals the wickedness underneath a fragile man. It's a wonder that Basil and Lord Henry were enamored with him."

"Everyone of us is capable of abomination, even those worthy of admiration. Beauty is two sides of the same cloth. One is virginal and pure of heart, the other, a seductive serpent hiding behind the veil biding its time to strike and consume its victims."

The ebb and flow of each vowel stemming from his lips felt like a spell being draped over Will. A silent caress faintly tracing his skin with words. Words that should not entice him, nor provoke the desires of his heart to rule whatever fragments of his already scathing mind lie. Why was this even more difficult than he'd imagined? It's one thing to think like a killer but to actually fall for one? Being born with this curse felt like a nightmare that he could not be pulled out unless someone guided him. He needed a paddle to keep him from falling into a deep bottomless pit.

That someone was a psychiatrist. Not just any psychiatrist. A dangerous handsome predator with a person suit concealing a beast that no human would dare tame until he came along. A prey that perfectly balanced the so-called good and the sultry greed of envy.

Will seeks to be normal but trying to be proved more than enough that either sane or insane can have the capacity to destroy without warning nor reason. It is better to be an outcast than to be a part of something that can dismantle a person whole.

Keeping his desire for Hannibal under wraps seemed stable at the time but now it is tiring to have to guard the closed gate and allow him to set himself free of everything that was holding him back from his true potential. *Let go Will.*

With a turn of his head, the profiler said, “Teach me.” facing the source of every fantasy and nightmare he had. “I want to be more than simply a friend. I want to be by your side if you’ll have me..my Chesapeake Ripper.”

Hannibal was struck with awe. He at last saw him for what he was and he certainly did not know what to do. He wanted to sweep Will into his arms, carry him into his bedroom and worship him until the dawn breaks the sky. It is best to let him decide and take the reins on moving forward with him.

“It would be my honor to court you Will. Whatever you desire is yours." The older man traced his fingers across his beloved’s cheek, feeling the fair stubble faintly prickle his skin, then leaning into his orbit carefully asking a second time. “May I have your permission to kiss you?”

“You may” Will replied in a husky voice and met him halfway in a soft tender dance of lips. They mirrored each other as teeth elegantly nipped skin to riveting effect.

Both men wanted to strip the other of clothing and bite every part of their bodies as a sign to others that they belong to each other. Will quietly reeled back but maintained enough physical contact to encircle his arms around Hannibal’s neck. “I’m not good at this whole relationship thing. I wonder what Abigail is gonna say when she finds out.”

“I’m certain she will be happy for us both. You have my word that our relationship will be between you and I. And I will refrain from involving you or our daughter in any scandal that will cease the downfall of my family.”

Will understood the consequences of being in a friendship with Hannibal, now escalating into a full blown affair with him. The well known doctor may have had previous experience before but never a courtship with someone as equally captivating as Will Graham. Love is ethereal and deadly. Beauty has tamed his beast and the beast earned Beauty’s love. “Sounds something like a man of your caliber would do. Protecting a significant other’s honor.” said the prolifer slightly teasing at his partner’s family history of aristocratic nobility.

To outsiders, Hannibal lives a life filled with splendor, beauty and wealth. An idyllic fairy tale. It may sound perfect but it does get lonely after a period of time. A long time indeed. Dalliances with faceless individuals that bear no name laid in his bed as results of flings. But with Will, twas not simply a mere unrequited romance one sided. It was a reciprocated mutual trust.

“What about Franklyn? He does harbor an infatuation with you to the point of wanting to be your friend…perhaps more?”

Hannibal did feel a bit uncomfortable from his previous talk with him: *“It makes me sad that I have to pay to see you.” The stiffness kicked in as soon as he heard it. There were two ways it could be interpreted. An admirer viewing their role model from afar or a stranger paying*

an escort for their services. Either scenario, it made the psychiatrist seize control in maintaining a facade of calmness for Mr. Froideveaux.

“It may seem Frankyln is in love with the idea of me. He uses the opportunity to create a false image to seek my approval.”

“You do have admirers from all sides Hannibal. Am I one of them?” Will innocently asked, batting those perky little eyelashes. The older gentlemen had no idea his lamb could use his charm to subdue anyone. With those blue-green as a rarity, the Count had gained an equal with unmatched god-like beauty. He’d certainly garnered a slew of followers, his family would demand an answer as to why he’s so smitten with a man whose sole company were animals but once they get to know Will a little better, they would be elated to have him and Abigail as permanent members of their household.

“You are the most important thing in my life, William. No one has tempted me as much as you *cara mia*. The world is your ocean.”

Will blushed to avoid Hannibal’s smirk. “You’ve probably said that to the other people who slept with you. And then there’s me, a lonely fisherman who’s had a few less pleasant one night stands.”

“They were heartless to enjoy it, not understanding the arts of seduction to satisfy their lovers, not requesting consent without crossing into a situation of ill repute. Lust is a misplaced love. I’d be fulfilled to give you lessons if you would like, I would not pursue you into an encounter you are not comfortable with.”

He was frozen for a few minutes at the offer. Taking etiquette lessons on lovemaking from the maestro of pleasure himself sounded way too far fetched. He’s not going to back down from his heart’s desire and no amount of looking the other way will change what he feels.

“I’m not fortune’s fool. I’m yours.”

There were so many risks they were taking to validate and confirm this was simply more than just a dirty little secret. They have waited far too long to finally be together and now it can be them forever.

“We can go at whichever pace. I do not want to frighten you from experiencing all of life’s indulgences. You are a treasure among the divine my dear Patraclous.”

The younger man sensed a thought pulsing in Hannibal’s intelligence. Was he simply a pawn in a game he knew he would lose? Or was it something else? Whatever the cause, he has to stay one step ahead to avoid suspicion from Freddie and any tricks she may have to ruin his chances of living the freedom he longed for.

“All right but only if I can eat more of your cooking. I may have developed a taste for it.”

“Accepted.”

It all feels strange. Seeing Hannibal in front of him. He could not get him out of his head no matter what he tried. They now have begun to blur, separating them will prove fatal. Conjoined. An unpredictable combination far more powerful than the Devil or God himself.

Hannibal sees himself neither angelic nor demonic. Stronger than both A fusion of divinity combined with the unstoppable magnetism to command whomever he wished. He was dangerous. The forbidden fruit of all of Will's erotic fantasies. He took a small bite and now he is craving more, aching to drink the elixir and no longer be the fragile teacup he once was.

"I've waited a long time for you, my love. The transformation to your becoming will be exquisite."

An eyebrow raised from Will caused him to say, "I think I've been past that tonight. Although I finally find you interesting. I can't wait to see what else is in store."

The older gentlemen smirked, "I would be elated to be your guide." The painting hanging on the right side of the dining room caught Will's gaze. "That's a very detailed painting.." His face flamed up at seeing the nude woman laying so subserviently. Eyes closed, the thin linen of her dress draped itself off her, revealing her breasts and exposing her sex while a handsome swan observed it all.

"Leda was queen of Sparta. She was envied for her beauty. Zeus spellbound took the form of a swan and mated with her. Upon that same night she laid with her husband King Tyndareus. She conceived two eggs which hatched. From both unions, four children were born. Helen who unfortunately became the catalyst of the Trojan war. Her twin brothers Castor and Pollux became the constellation Gemini and the youngest daughter Clytemnestra annihilated her husband and ruled with his brother as queen."

"So all of her children were worshiped simply for who they were. Offspring of gods and mortals. I can't imagine being in their footsteps and be brought into the world only to be admired and despised "

"Fate is curious. It is often better to accept both as opposed to being partly who you are. We all have darkness in us."

There was no denying that point of view. Humans tend to steer clear of anything that feels monstrous, they pray to their degenerate non-existent god for aid in purging of their sins. There was no correct or incorrect answer in asking if such power existed. What mattered was how man was more selected to endure the fiery pain torments of hell, they were not driven down by either Lucifer or God. They were sentenced due to their own guilt. Forced to relive the sins over and over for the rest of time.

"Why do you lavish me with gifts? I am considered a commoner, so why do you prefer spending all of your time with a scruffy professor and not some wealthy heiress? Is it because of my empathy? Or is it something more? Let's face it I'm never going to be accepted in your social circle. You should probably dump me and meet someone else."

"And, what a waste that would be. I've walked this earth for nearly half my life and can report you have no twin. No one as angry, as stubborn, as unaccommodating, as

maddening…"

"Sounds like trash to me."

"As loving, as dedicated, as thoughtful. As imperfectly perfect as you've become. You're a challenge every sunset, Saint William. And I'd have it no other way."

Will definitely was dreaming. He showed up thinking he was going to be rejected by a man completely out of his league only for the reverse flip to occur. "So, are we..?"

"Together? I suppose we can conceal our romance for now. Unless our lives are accessed without consent from either of us, I will not refer you by name to any other patient, especially Franklyn."

"We're on a first name basis now?"

"If you prefer it."

The man did not want to admit it. His name sounds so nice coming from him. Each vowel was smooth as velvet, soft as silk and decadent to his ears. "Beverly is going to want answers. Please don't think of eating her."

"She is a dear friend to you. I only consume the rude."

"You mean *we*?" Hannibal chuckled softly. He was so charmed by this shy and curious creature. Unaware of its potential to kill, appease and shower him with praise. So timid in appearance at first and by his own hand morphed into something far more powerful. A being matched in ferocity, intelligence and exotic exquisiteness. The lamb belongs to the lion as the lion belongs to the lamb.

"I want to visit Abigail tomorrow."

"Then we shall, my love."

The younger man still believed he was in some kind of fantasy. A hallucination. A universe where everything seemed perfect. Completely perfect. He could be whoever he wanted to be. He gained the favor of someone comprehensible, attractive, vengeful and can inflict pain without lifting a hand.

"I should probably head home. The dogs are probably worried whether or not their owner ended up as the Chesapeake Ripper's next meal."

"I assure they will be relieved to see you alive."

Walking his guest to the door, Hannibal felt the urge to not let him leave but suppress those thoughts down for now. It surely was a very tempting offer but it was not the appropriate time to act on them. There will be plenty of time. All that mattered was the gorgeous Venus in his doorway. "Thank you, I had a nice time. I-I honestly can't remember the last time I had dinner with someone."

“You deserve to be. I must confess your beauty was what first caught my attention when we met.”

He did not know what to say. Will was speechless. No one had ever said that to him. He rarely was complimented in terms of looks. Sure, he is attractive in a way however people tend to ignore his existence entirely without realizing he was there. “You don’t really mean that, do you?”

A soft smile lightened Hannibal’s face. His eyes showed a gentleness hardly seen by anyone. It should be a crime for a single person to not shower Will with luxury. He absolutely had no clue just how much of a hold they have on each other. A force that cannot be explained from the expertise of the gifted.

“I do. Your true nature is beginning to reveal itself. A savage beast filled with a power unimaginable even the gods fear its name. You are wicked.”

The man felt a rush of desire at hearing his host describe what he was feeling. He wanted to kiss those enticing lips, remove that delectable suit from his body and fuck him until he could no longer sense his own heartbeat. It will have to wait. He wanted to know him personally aside from the well mannered socialite. He simply did not care if he is labeled a slut or gold digger. There were far more worse things to be called in this day.

“I will see you tomorrow? Good night Hannibal.” He said to the older man who nodded instead of replying. There were no words to say what they were feeling. Both men walked past the point of no return entering into unfamiliar territory with what has been occurring between them so far; From esteemed colleagues, acquaintances to possible partners in an old world courtship culminated in a formula perfect for a Jane Austen book.

The psychiatrist watched as the Volvo station wagon disappeared from his vision. He overstepped boundaries before but none like this. A chess match of survival. Two hearts pushing the other pieces one by one off until they remained. One was shielding itself with an invisible barrier while the other displayed every single emotion it could muster and the shy heart gave in willingly and morphed with its companion.

Wolf Trap, Virginia

Mr Graham laid in bed while his pack of seven slept cozily in a tight circle. He could still sense the feelings from earlier. The dinner, the way Hannibal acted so courteously with him and their discussion about breaking chains and embracing desires freely. It certainly must felt nice to be wooed. He could not imagine it was with a man. A man whose penchant for the finer things ceased when Will came in and cultivated in changing not only himself but him included.

The kiss in Hannibal’s office struck the man in the face with its overall passion. The heat still bloomed with a soft warmth on his skin. Licking his lips, he could sense the strong masculine spice of his mouth. The smooth rich clean aroma of his aftershave felt nice and so right.

His world was one filled with prestige, beauty and power. Only special individuals were allowed. Will never got the memo that he was entitled to garner attention, never until Hannibal gracefully waltzed in and swept him off his own two feet. He offered a glimpse of what can be his if he gave up in allowing others to control him and let him be in control.

There was a door in his mind. It pulsed beaten on cue with Will's. The man could hear a song so beautiful on the other side and an accented voice inviting him in. He could refuse to enter if he wanted to but his hand twisted the doorknob and walked forward.

A silent echo of another heart followed behind and merged with his. A synchronized duet of souls. He knew precisely what he wanted. He simply was afraid of acting on those feelings.

Chapter 4

Port Haven Psychiatric Hospital

Abigail felt like a typical young woman. Except for the fact her father killed multiple women who resembled her. It was a disturbed truth for anyone to uncover let alone herself.

Touching the healed wound on her throat, she could still feel the sharpness of the blade cut into her skin. Blood was pooling, she could not breathe until Will and Hannibal saved her from the den of a once loving father now deranged without a conscience which is how she ended up here in the first place.

She heard from another patient about Freddie Lounds mustering up an article on her father for her dramatic crime blog. Whatever journalist she was, it certainly did not do Abigail no favors in seeing her privacy be breached to gain notoriety on an investigation without understanding the harm it does to the families of the victims. She was grateful for surviving in what could have been her death. In a bizarre twist of fate, one became her protector, the other a teacher and together formed a familial trio.

A knock on the door made her turn to see who it could be. It was Mischa. Hannibal's sister.

She was dressed in a monochrome sleeved dress hidden within a fur trimmed sleeved coat of the same tone. Her heels were a stunning shade of dark red wine toned with a gray Prada bag. She looked like a goddess. "Hello Abigail. You appear much better."

"I am. Thank you. You look. Wow." Her hand gestured to the whole aesthetic point of her clothing. It's not that she admires fashion, she felt it was too far beyond her expertise when it came to her attire which was more rustic and outdoorsy. But it does not mean she knows when someone styles themselves well enough to maintain a sense of dignity. She felt under dressed.

"Have you come to take me home?" She politely asked.

Mischa replied with, "Yes, i have spoken with the physician, took care of the paperwork and your luggage is in my car so we must get going. Come along." She and Abigail quietly left the building without any disturbance.

The sleek smooth hand stitching of the leather seat inside the Jaguar made Abigail stiff as a tree. Only a few people in the entirety of the world could afford to own a car like Mischa's. From how clean and spotless it looks on the outside, the interior was maintained with care and cautiousness to avoid damaging such a priceless relic revered in the world of the wealthy.

"Have you noticed lately how your brother looks at Will?"

"I have. Though I cannot say I am surprised to know my brother's affection for Will goes far beyond that of mere companionship. He sees an equal in him. An apex predator bowing not in submission but accepting equal power."

Abigail now understood the mysterious albeit synchronized connection between Hannibal and Will. They were two very different personalities. It would be impossible for them to co-exist yet it somehow worked without any logic or reason whatsoever. Two souls connected by an odd affinity.

“So the lion fell in love with the lamb.” She muttered faintly.

“What a stupid lamb.” Mischa quoted.

“What a sick masochistic lion.” Abigail’s expression changed into cringe-like at what she and Mischa just phrased. “Why couldn’t the main character simply just say no to both men? Is that hard to choose?”

“The writing is equally just as flimsy. I do prefer Wuthering Heights because of its Gothic atmospheric tone and doomed love between Catherine and Heathcliffe.”

“It is a classic for romantics, I can say that. Personally, I never read it but would like to.”

Mischa smirked, “You’d be surprised at reading out of your comfort zone. Perhaps Hemingway or Forster.” The young girl smiled with a rare openness that had not come out before. “Okay, this might sound dumb. I don’t know you at all and already you’re the sister I never had.”

“It does not sound dumb at all.”

Abigail certainly knew she’d be gazed at if she allowed herself to be part of a world filled with glamour and the beautiful people that lived it. Some people would kill to catch a glimpse and be able to touch a sample.

“I heard from Will that you invited him to an opera and Hannibal was there. Did anything happen?”

“My brother was taken with how Will looked as if he were the living embodiment of Michelangelo’s David. A vision of perfection so rare..it made him speechless. I have not spoken to him about it since that night.”

Abigail then asked, “Do you believe they could be.getting to know each other before starting a relationship? From what you have been saying, it seems your brother is Mr Darcy straight out of Pride and Prejudice.”

“We were raised in a household steeped in manners, education and wealth that even several powerful appointed businessmen would cower at their own feet.”

“So your family is rich?”

‘We’re comfortable.”

“That is exactly what a super rich person would say.” Abigail hindered.

The Jaguar parked behind the Bentley to which both women were aware but not worried. Crossing the threshold into her brother's manor-like home felt like stepping into their ancestral grounds all over again when they were merely children. It was nice to see him after all this time.

Carrying the luggage up the stairs and stowed in the closet of the guest bedroom proved simple. Sensing a familiar aroma of her sibling's peculiar taste in wine, Mischa along with Abigail entered Hannibal's study. They noticed him sitting at his desk with a leather bound book lavish in a contemporary Moroccan red tone.

"Before me things create were none, save things Eternal, and eternal I endure."

The older gentlemen smirked. "Well done. Your Latin has improved."

"It comes with the territory of being a member of a nearly unknown European aristocratic family with ties to an infamous general that would put even the most influential matriarchs to shame."

His sister was not wrong about it. The history of the Lecter family could trace their line all the way back to the man who began it all. Hannibal was the son of a general, he then rose through the ranks in the Carthage army. Rome grew afraid of his capability from then on earning the name Hannibal the 'Grim' due to his strategic military tactics to demolish. The bloodline spanned throughout centuries passing to his father marrying his mother who was Italian and a descendant of a noble family that ruled Milan for two centuries. His uncle Robert took the position for a while then it passed down to Mischa who restored it bit by bit to its former glory.

Hannibal closed the book and set it down before rising from the chair, walked around and leaned against it. His posture with arms crossed meant he was serious but something weighed on his mind.

"Is something wrong?" Abigail asked. She hasn't exactly known her new family for very long and it already feels as if she were a part of it.

"Yes there is. I am worried what Will will encounter if we were to go public. He will be scrutinized because of his background, hounded mercifully by envious admirers who would take great joy in seeing him crumble."

"I have been keeping a close eye on Miss Lounds for some time and the way she maneuvers around to spread fictitious rumors, it does raise concern on the questionable authenticity of the sources." Mischa spoke with mannerism yet held an ill liking for Freddie because of her behavior to create drama when it did not need to be. "Did Will consent to this courtship?"

Hannibal slightly nodded, giving his answer. It was rare of him to express any type of emotion in front of anyone. He did not anticipate what would become of this and it already began to insulate command over something he could control yet dangle it from him.

Abigail then said, "If this is what you want and if it brings you happiness..then go for it."

The doctor nodded once again showing a tiny smile. It may seem peculiar to show any bouts of vulnerability in regards to his relationship with someone beneath him. He was sought after by many mainly due to his upbringing in the inner exclusive circles of Europe's aristocracy, wanting to inherit the riches and gain status in return. He grew exhausted from prying away those envy with greed and grew with ache in wanting to find his equal. He found it in Will Graham.

"I may need assistance from you both."

Mischa smiled, "You have our word."

Franklyn twiddled his thumbs back and forth. He kept arriving on time to his appointments and lately has noticed Dr Lecter was distracted. Was it something from his past? Or could it be related to his consulting for the FBI? Whatever the cause was, he grew anxious to know if he was all right.

The door remained closed with a slight slit and the man could hear voices from the other side. Carefully the shorter man tiptoed curiously to see what awaited. Maybe he planned something for him? An invitation to be accepted into his world? With one eye, he peered into the slit and saw him. He looked regal in his three piece suit. Sophisticated, elegant and tall for a man of his age. Only he was not alone. Someone else sat across from him. Another man.

This man was attractive but in a plain way. His facial structure appeared average, his clothing consisted of a soft vest, plaid buttoned shirt and pants that have seen better days. He seemed out of place next to Dr Lecter's broad stature. Perhaps a patient?

Both of them stood up. The graceful psychiatrist removed something from his desk and handed it to the other gentlemen. He tucked his chin downward perhaps to hide his flushed appearance in the doctor's presence. What Frankyln witnessed next made him agasp in shock.

Hannibal curled his fingers underneath the younger man's chin which the other purred softly at the contact. Their faces leaned in turning at the right angle to meet in a soft tender embrace of lips which was carefully elevated in which the baby faced youth gently pulled away and whispered something Frankyn could not understand. It did not stop whoever this man was from slightly pushing his body forward begging to be kissed again and the handsome doctor pressed his mouth to the young man's once again. Only this time, the display seemed more suited to an intimate setting like a bedroom.

The doctor reeled himself from the beautiful angel and sensed they were being observed but could not identify the source. His eyes moved from the door to see an eye looking not at Will but at him. He tidied his suit to ease the atmosphere and confront whomever interrupted a private moment. It swung open and Frankyln awkwardly stood there like a deer caught in headlights.

“Mr Friodevearux, may I ask why are you here?” The other man said, “There is something I need to say. Why?”

“Why what?” Will asked questioning on who this man was and ignored him, keeping his focus on Dr Lecter.

Frankyln snapped, “I wasn’t talking to you. Why him? Why do you lavish him with gifts and invitations to dine with you when I should be the one. No one understands you like I do. I deserve to be at your side, not him.” He pointed at Will with frustration at seeing someone below the social ladder mingling with someone of high prestige.

“He lets you call him by his name. Tell me what you have that I don’t.” The shorter man viciously asked the man standing next to Hannibal. Will responded with brutal honesty saying, “Nothing. I’m nothing.”

“I’m sorry Frankyln but I must ask you to leave. Now.” Hannibal spoke sternly. The other man walked away with an invisible tail between his legs at being humiliated.

When the space became quiet again, Will walked backwards with Hannibal closing the door behind him with barely a sound. “He’s right, you know. I’m not special in any shape or form.” He said lying to himself. He shouldn’t even be here yet here he was on his own free will. Not manipulated nor forced.

The older man exhaled walking back to Will. With the touch light as a feather, he lovingly placed his love’s right hand and rested it against the breast pocket of his suit. Will’s palm fitted perfectly, feeling the slight cool texture of the material on his fingertips. A strong steady rhythm pulsed from inside feeding its energy to let him know it's alive because of him. “You are important to me. You are more precious than anything I have known. In my eyes, you are special.”

Will could sense a river of blood heating up his face in response to Hannibal’s deceleration. *Was he always this smitten with any of his previous lovers or was this the first time?* Whichever thought he had figuring out whether or not pursuing this was even what he wanted threw itself out the window as he did not need words to say what he felt in this exact moment. His blue-green eyes twinkled and it was such an intriguing sight for Hannibal to see for himself.

“I want this to continue. I really do and I want more than simply a one time fling. I crave to be yours in every way humanly possible,” Will maneuvered his body to encircle himself in the man who he could not stop thinking about. He was playing a lethal game of hearts with a being known to be a Don Juan. The irresistible pull that Hannibal emitted off hypnotized, wowed and attracted anyone to fall under his spell, even Will. He resisted at first to his charms yet he could not deny he enjoyed it simply more than anyone who encountered him. A man who enjoys his affairs like the finest of wines. Until Will changed everything he previously thought of love. He simply had to have him.

The taller man leaned down slightly to whisper, “I insist on taking you to a formal dinner. Just you and me.”

“Do I have to wear a suit?” Will politely asked. He’d never imagined himself being courted in this way. Swept off his feet by someone who could belong in the pages of vintage Victorian romances was certainly a sign he did not see coming. This surely had to be one of his dreams right?

“It is a requirement. Not a word until that evening. Understood?”

“Yes.”

“Very well. Open your gift.”

Will noticed an object wrapped beautifully with a gold bow. He unwrapped it, unveiling a sealed manuscript. The spine was decorated in the style of the early 18th century. The entails struck a chord inside the empath’s mind. “Edgar Allen Poe?”

“The greatest writer of horror and a Dark Romantic. He enabled his work to be immortalized. He understood love, pride and death as not as something to fear but as a symbol for morality.” Hannibal’s eyes showed genuine interest in seeing his mongoose be spoiled with treasures. He never became permanently involved let alone manifest a romantic connection with a man.

It was always a short affair mostly of a sensual nature and no ill intentions. It certainly has been a while since he himself was this enraptured with anyone apart from a few mere schoolyard crushes in his youth. There was something about Will that got under his skin. He was unlike the others. He frequently denied he was special, somehow Hannibal’s world wanted him to let go and be enchanted. A man unaware of not only his outer beauty but the dark charismatic siren he kept sheltered. A lethal combination of light and elusiveness to tempt unwary people.

“Thank you. I’m guessing this is where we kiss goodbye?”

Hannibal smiled, “if you would like it to be.” And so they did. It still maintains a tingle of the hidden sparks hovering between them throughout the past few weeks.

The younger man left, leaving a slimmer of what transpired just moments in Hannibal’s office. He at last was seen not as a freak or used for entertainment. He is receiving what he himself had gotten from his mother but in a more complex manner and tone. A love he can cherish with all of his heart. A love he would fight to keep from falling into those who would no doubt use it for their own end.

When Will had gone for the day, the psychiatrist resumed a recent drawing he’d begun to sketch the night before. It was partially fleshed out with the upper and bottom proportions given depth and dimension with each muscle mapped with such flawlessness it could come off the page.

The crown of curls atop magnified the innocence of the face combined with how the man posed with no degree of shame or fear of exposing his bare form in all its glory. *He* was his muse. So captivating. His intelligence was far from the only detail to validate his claim on the

boy. His beauty reminded him of Ganymede, the immortal cup-bearer of the gods. Innocent and wise that Hannibal's breath caught in this throat the moment he laid sight of him.

It came as a surprise that Will had not engaged previously in courtly affairs. He had a unique perspective on love: To never let anyone near him despite him wanting to forge a connection. It always worked with him being rejected or the other person bailing before meeting.

He seemed unaware of the hold they have on the other. It could have startled anyone else if they were in his place receiving praise and attention from an unknown stranger. In this day some would say romance is dead and gone but he still believed in its powerful aura to alter and define lives. A power to grant and take love away in an instant if it were used with sinister motives.

It also seemed as if Will was made specifically for him. Not simply as an enemy but as a companion. Someone equal to him that can achieve what he rightfully deserves.

Quantico

Will's eyes quietly scanned his colleague's notes on the case he'd been assigned to. This suspect couldn't be the Chesapeake Ripper. If he certainly was, it was a failed performance. Whoever is doing this..they want to be noticed. To be seen on the perfect level as him.

"Look at the arch of the spheres and the hands are positioned upward. Could that mean anything?" Price asked while examining the severity of the victim's hands or what remained of them.

"It symbolizes the Fool. The beginning card in a tarot deck. When represented upright , it can determine a bright future, lasting relationship and financial opportunities. If it's reversed, the negative characteristics can inflict everything and be wiped away." Will showed the trio a photo on his phone of what the crime scene was supposed to represent.

Beverly arched her brow at the perpetrator they were investigating, "Guy's a fledgling. He certainly picked the right victim but there's no open MO. So we keep digging until there is." Zeller and Price kept scourging the corpse for clues while Will and Beverly headed out of the lab to ease off the morbid dreariness of the case.

"How was therapy? Did he give you another one of his rare gifts?"

Will replied, "We were in the middle of an intimate moment when Frankyln interrupted. He flew into a rant asking why I was being pampered and saying it should have been him. Then Hannibal told him to leave."

"Whoa. Is this guy delusional? Does he actually believe he's entitled to be his 'friend'. If anything he is trying way too hard to do so. Got any plans for the weekend?" She asked while noticing how her friend fidgeted in slightly avoiding the question. It took a bit more nudging until he finally gave an answer. "Hannibal invited me to a dinner for both of us. Alone"

Beverly smiled at just how much she was hearing. “You on a date? It seems your empathy is not the only thing Dr. Lecter is interested in. For one, your face is exactly like that statue made by that Michael guy in Italy.”

“*Statue of David* by Michelangelo you mean? You really need to stop comparing me to a seventeen foot sculpture of a naked guy. The resemblance is kind of scary.”

The woman stood concerned in hearing Will denying his physique. “Oh come on. Look at you, you're a catch.” Will can’t argue with that. It had taken a long time to accept that. No one knew except his mother who gradually kept her promise of not revealing due to it being a decision of Will’s.

“Honestly I never expected this to happen. It just seems like a fantasy. Here I am seeing someone who understands me, respects me, and bestows me with rare gifts and I-I don’t know how to respond.”

“Well for starters, your boyfriend only has eyes for you. If you want Frankie to back off, you’re going to need to show Hannibal how much he means to you and that starts with that date. No buts all right?” The man mouthed ‘okay’ to Beverly who delightfully clapped her hands.

“To answer your previous question he did surprise me with a rare copy of *Tamerane and Other Poems* by Edgar Allan Poe. I’m assuming he has connections to find whatever he deems valuable. He isn’t what I thought a typical psychiatrist would be. Let alone someone who is born with a lifestyle some would die to obtain. Status nor wealth should define a person. Humanity does.”

Beverly had to blink her eyes and pinch her arm to fully hear Will’s monologue. “Did you meet any other family members?”

“His sister. She is enchanting. As for the rest I hope I earn their approval.”

“Well, you’re on a good start and who knows, maybe you’ll be the future husband? Mr. Will Graham-Lecter?” She teased snarky at her friend’s enamored and strong attachment to his yet so called partner.

“I’ve never seen you this invested in my love life. Not assuming I had one before and now it’s starting to become a good thing I guess?”

“Don’t let your boyfriend’s clingy fan get in the way of you being happy with him. The both of you look perfect together. A man who’s well dressed, has manners, cooks and is a romantic when it comes to the art of love. You are lucky.”

Will chuckled lightly, “We’re complete opposites but mirror the other. Does that seem strange?”

“Magnetism. Attraction. Balance in codependency. These all are factors of a budding romance with two full grown consenting adults. What I do understand is this; If anyone,

especially that cheese man gives you a hard time, I will not hesitate to make sure they know their place."

"Take it easy Rambo. You don't need to lop heads off. You're far more intimidating with words."

"And you're a puppy eyed lovesick fisherman who did not know he could love and caught a big fish."

He was lost for what to say next. Beverly used her words with tender care rather than interrogation. He did not deserve someone like her to be his friend and here she was giving her trust in him as he does to her. She was a force to be reckoned with.

Will's house

Scrunching his eyes to ease the dreariness of falling asleep at his desk with four other case files open. The crime scene photos each depicted individuals brutalized in horrendous ways.

The victim depicting the 'Fool' was an investment analyst who partook in gambling off his earnings. His cause of death was a GSW to the head, the body was found buried in a tremendous pile of cash with the words GREED written in blood.

The second portraying the 'Empress' was a well known socialite whose vast inheritance attracted amorous admirers. Her cause of death was the diamond necklace dipped in mercury. The body was swollen and bloated from the poisoning in her system. The word PRIDE sprawled across the pillows in her bed.

The third and fourth victims were a couple whose sexual escapades were frequented at a local swinger's club. Their lifeless bodies were found nude, bruised and displayed as a sex game gone wrong. The word LUST painted across both of their chests.

The final victim playing the 'Hanged Man' was a well respected judge whose capacity for sending innocent people and earning a commission had been found suspended upside down with his throat slit with jagged overkill and the words WRATH carved on the oak tree.

Whoever this person is clearly took their time inflicting pain psychically and emotionally. It was only a matter of time before they hunt down their next choice.

Verger Estate

Margot read the latest post from Tattle Crime. It did irk her to see just how Freddie was able to be granted access without regards to privacy. Her ambitions would often get the best of the search to make her readers come back for more. It certainly questioned the liability of her career as a tabloid journalist rather than the monstrosity of the crimes.

Exclusive and secretive locations. Class. Social Status. All symbols of the highly elite. Will sent her a text about the possible meanings of each of the victims.

Each one had a compulsion. A secret to conceal but the way the killer chose his suspects suggest his earlier theory of them being a loner. Someone who wants to attract the attention of the Chesapeake Ripper.

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

> The restaurant that Will and Hannibal got to is a real fancy top four star French restaurant in Boston MA. Leave a kudo if desired.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Bistro Du Midi

Will closed his eyes and let his mind slowly ease into the stream. The sensation of the cool water calmed him whenever he could. “Would you like something else?” A female voice startled him and his eyes opened to see a waiter asking in a calm gentle tone.

He replied, “No, not just yet. I’m waiting. I’m expecting someone.” The server nodded before moving on leaving the profiler to his own devices. He carefully picked up the glass of wine, twirling it gently, allowing the crisp liquid to swirl in all of its elegance. Setting it back down, he soon felt a presence. The aroma of a familiar scent perforated his senses. A scent he’d come to admire.

“Hello Will” A smooth velvet voice made the young man’s head and saw Dr. Lecter dressed quite formally in his own style. Sitting across from him made him appear regal. The soft lighting highlighted the sharp daunt of his cheekbones illuminated his beauty. He seemed sophisticated as if he’d done this over a period of time.

“Hi”

“...By the cut of your suit, you went to Oxford or wherever..and actually believe human beings dress like that. But you wear it with such pride, my guess is you were born with money and your school friends never let you forget it. And that makes perfect sense since most psychiatrists tend to avoid contact rather than listening to their patients.“

“You’re correct on that notion. Am I your psychiatrist or are we simply having a conversation?”

“Yes” I think is the answer to that.” The atmosphere was calm and silent. There was no one aside from them enjoying time outside of their jobs. “What was the brutalization hiding?”

“This killer feels alone. The kills were displays of seeking the attention of the Ripper. More so wanting him to notice and earn his love.” Hannibal took the statement and tucked into his mind palace determined to uncover what would cause someone to turn their rage upon others. “I assumed this individual became inspired by the seven deadly sins. The murders indicate

four out of seven; greed, pride, lust and wrath. The victims were all within social circles, educated and respected. Why did he choose them?"

"No body parts nor internal organs were removed from the corpses. He displayed them as of what he aches to become and also as a sign of desperation to belong."

"Loneliness is slowly rising into an epidemic. We all seek what we cannot have. It soon takes control and consumes until the very brink of destruction." The profiler's throat hitched. "Is what you feel for me real?" His cobalt eyes portrayed a glimpse of curious innocence. The older gentleman was simply bewildered at how beautiful his boy looked in the light. A being too rich for youth. Iridescent in his movements and acutely aware of his own vitality and self worth. It was enough for Hannibal to see what they could be.

"Of course. No force is far greater than the bond between us."

Will's eyes met Hannibal's. Neither spoke nor utter a word. It did not matter if they did. It almost seemed they were the only people. He could not phrase what he was feeling. It certainly felt like a dream. One where he wished it would continue for the rest of time. Forever.

"I never had anyone out of work spend time with me. Let alone someone I care about." muttered Will while he still kept his gaze on the man whom he is carefully opening himself up to.

The other man grazed his thumb across his angel's knuckles sensing a slight shiver from him. This delightful minx excited him with a fever of darkness to worship and caress until they were merely ashes joined in eternity.. He felt as if he had known Will in a past life far from this one. One where they were together but torn apart over and over across time until now. He would never allow death to slip him away again. "There is something else I wish to give you."

Reaching into his jacket pocket, Hannibal placed a key into Will's hand. "Use this to enter my home whenever you'd like. As my partner, you have my permission."

"I can't accept this. It's already difficult enough that Franklyn is obsessed with you. It might anger him even more if he sees me spend time with you."

"Do not fret. I have already spoken with a colleague who will aid in getting the help he needs."

Will still can't shake the words Frankyln said to him yesterday; *I deserve to be the one not him.* What kind of a person demands to be handed everything despite making a bit of physical contact outside a professional setting.

He was nothing more than someone whose neurosis had been building over time until he was put into the care of Dr. Lecter and soon it began to crumble due to trying to garner his attention away from Will to him. If he was going to humiliate him, he definitely needed to remind him of who is Hannibal's favorite.

Outside Hannibal's office

Franklyn stood outside of Dr. Lecter's office. He brought a nicely tucked basket of an expensive wine with a terrific selection of a well imported cheese.

An Aston Martin DBS V12 was parked unanimously near the main entrance. A handsome brooding man exited the vehicle. His clothes consisted of a sleek dark navy button sleeved shirt matched with slim beige colored pants. His attire screamed someone of high prestige. His longer than average parted dark brown hair looked dashing on his chiseled face with full eyebrows. His piercing blue green-hazel eyes met his.

"Can I help you?"

"I'm looking for Dr. Lecter. I have an appointment with him. Who are you?"

"That is confidential. Sir, I am terribly sorry but Dr. Lecter has canceled appointments for the rest of the afternoon. Have a good day." He re-entered the car and quietly sped off leaving Franklyn in the dust.

It was unlike him to not show for work. What could possibly be refraining a respectable psychiatrist to withdraw for a single day? Maybe it was because of his consulting that took him away from speaking with patients.

Or simply it could be due to him traveling to visit someone. Was he seeing anyone? During each of his encounters with him, he tried to ask the good doctor if he was in a relationship. He avoided speaking of the topic due to his sheer thick veil of privacy more so for the sake of his job. Franklyn had to wonder who would be bold enough to snatch the heart of Baltimore's most eligible bachelor. A teenage accountant who moonlights as a call boy perhaps? Or a voluptuous heiress with a calculated list of trysts? Hannibal deserves better than lying unethical lovers.

All his life, he wanted to join the most exclusive secretive social circles of the rich and was always turned down. He may finally have a chance to soak up the admiration he desired with the most perfect man at his side. It truly sounded far fetched to some but to him, it was everything.

To be adored, envied and loved with someone as Dr. Hannibal Lecter as a guide would be his first step into tossing aside his old life and embracing all of the splendor. By the time he caught up with the enigmatic car it vanished into thin air. Who was he? And how did he know the psychiatrist? There was only one solution.

Will's house

A man of late thirties was nestled under a tree in the main yard of his home. His furry companions frolic around sniffing their surroundings. They let out small woofs at an older man walking up to him. It was the mail carrier dropping something off. When he left, Will looked around to see if anyone was observing him. When the coast was clear, he opened the envelope and it contained a message. It read:

My dearest Will

The previous night was nothing short of splendid. I request your presence at this very moment. I have important news to share with you. - H.L.

Will felt his heart flutter a million times faster than average. Dusting his knees off, he quickly darted back inside the house to shower. It took him a while to debate whether or not he should dress formally or like he always did before he started seeing Hannibal. “Blue or gray?” he asked the group of fluffy canines. Winston mostly just stared with his nose pointed towards the right.

“Going with the blue then.” He muttered while the dogs simply went back to sleep. He then grabbed his keys and quietly left. Backing out of the driveway and onto the road arriving into the city, he became nervous apart from how he acted the night he finally decided to give this a chance.

He never considered himself lucky, not under any circumstances an expert in the romance department, specifically dating. He was more of an introvert in high school, a timid shy person. Teaching students the darkest tunnels of the human mind at Quantico gave him as much contact as he could muster without swaying into idiocy. Seeing an attractive sharply dressed man take a romantic interest in him nearly made him want to bolt and hide from the world.

Will could not have imagined himself engaging in his own desires with someone who much less enjoys seeing him succumb to those thoughts. For a long while, he outright condoned feeling anything more than acknowledgement for Hannibal Lecter despite the restless strong need to act on them.

It should not be this difficult to admit to wanting to be in a relationship. What was worse is having that exact same person give one hundred percent of their time and does not demand anything from him.

By the time he reached his kind-of-boyfriend slash partner’s extravagant residence, he pulled out a box wrapped with a red bow. He wanted to give something he would like.

Hannibal’s house

The doctor opened the door to see Will standing looking ethereal as ever. “Hello darling. Come in.” Following him into the study, the younger man noticed a small gold plate with an array of delicate fruit and two crystal wine glasses placed effortlessly as if it awaited his arrival.

“It seems like you planned this.” Will said softly as he saw Hannibal pouring wine carefully. The sleeves were folded up to the elbows exposing toned arms. The type of arms that can incapacitate and hold someone down but can also map and touch one’s skin to sheer blissful enlightenment. “Plan what?” He asked Will and passed a glass to him. Their fingers ghosting each other’s skin sent a tiny tingle of electricity through them.

“Canceling appointments and assembling this so you could have me all to yourself in your house.” He spoke before taking a sip of the wine. The smooth texture of the liquid hit the tip of his tongue calming him down immediately while focusing his eyes on the man staring back with devotion.

“It is my intention to drown you in indulgence. Allow yourself to be seduced.” Hannibal loves beautiful things. He loves beautiful music, beautiful art, beautiful food and beautiful people. Will personified perfection in his eyes. Decedent and life-like for him to touch. “I have developed an affinity to conceal you from those who wish to cause harm.” He reached out and caressed the warm canvas. Fingertips sweeping under the jawline causing the skin on Will to flush and spread downwards towards his neck.

“I understand a few of your students suspect their professor of having an affair.” Will smirked and asked, “Aren’t I?” leaning closer into Hannibal’s designated space. His lips appear at his ear then his neck, peppering it in barely open mouth nips. Will moans softly at the contact to which the other man whispered something in a foreign dialect that made the brunette crush his month to his lover’s in a surprisingly subtle passionate display instantly psychologically marking Hannibal as his mate. A minimal warning to potential candidates to look elsewhere.

Still holding the angel’s serene face in his hands, Hannibal grazed his thumb across Will’s lips. Eyes closed in pleasure, cheeks tinted a soft shell pink as a result of blood slowly accelerating due to the heat slowly simmering. A man who could be easily mistaken for a young adolescent because of how he would look without the scruff brought arousal to Hannibal’s whole form. “I want you. While I’m still me. Why I still want you this way.” Will said in a husky voice breathing heavily. It is carefully eating him alive at being the one worshiped wholeheartedly.

The older man delicately placed his hands on Will’s waist. With a gentle grip he brought him until their bodies were pressed together with no space left uncovered. The sound of footsteps approaching made both of them see Abigail with a hinted smirk. “Sorry. Awkward timing. I’ll be in my room.” She quietly walked away and closed the door behind her leaving the couple still standing in the study.

“It seems she knows that we are romantically linked. I suppose she can keep a secret.”

“Hardly anyone can keep secrets these days. Unless they are educated, wealthy and a phenomenal kisser.” said Will easing the conversation back onto him. The psychiatrist hummed in agreement. “Before you, my life was a moonless night. No stars to guide. I was lost until you found me.”

“We both were. I’m afraid that I’d like to stay with you. Much more than I should.” Will said adamantly confessing to exhibiting intense emotions of achenes. To feel his touch on his skin with the expertise of an artist combined with the sheer ferocity of a ruthless beast.

“I assumed there’s something you wanted to tell me?”

“Yes. My parents will be arriving for a visit by the end of the week. I wish for you and Abigail to attend.”

Did he just say what I think he said? His parents are coming?! "Entangled with an FBI profiler and pursuing a romantic relationship with him is bound to have people talking."

"I tend to keep my personal life hidden for a variety of reasons. It remains a mystery." Will thought long and hard on what his answer might be, "I'd like to meet them." It may have taken a brief amount of time to insert himself in a relationship he had no idea he needed but secretly wished he did so had he known Dr. Lecter sooner rather than later.

Either way, it may have both the FBI, the State Medical Board and personas raising concerns as to who instigated the relationship. It never is a good idea to ask questions to someone of a high position to question their life outside the workspace. Usually it ends up with a lawsuit of some kind.

Ms. Lounds does have a tool in maneuvering headlines in order to appease readers with the most entertaining spicy details about the upper exclusiveness of Baltimore's bachelors and bachelorettes. Will is keeping his sights and an extra eye on Franklyn. It certainly inverted a chain of events that is yet to come.

Dr Du Maurier's house

A dark haired Asian woman looked over her shoulder before knocking. The door opened and a stunning blonde welcomed her in. "Were you followed?" She asked. The other woman shook her head implying 'No'. It is not easy to maintain a relationship aside from the job. Let alone seeing someone with an image to behold.

Beverly crossed her fingers with Bedelia's who then placed a kiss onto her head. This thing between them started six years earlier, it started as an unexpected first meeting at the local botanical gardens. Exchanges mixed with shared text messages led to a swoon worthy first date later culminating to where they are now.

"This case is nothing like the ones Will has worked before. There's something about it that's bugging me."

"Care to elaborate?" Bedelia asked quietly. Her demeanor was never this relaxed or calm from years of examination. However, thanks to her girlfriend, she was able to show a side of herself that no one even knew existed. Given the position she is in as a professional expert in dividing down the human mind, she and Beverly were one thousand percent certain had no signs of slowing down or showing how much they care about the other.

"Will has a theory that the killer is displaying his kills as 'gifts' to the Chesapeake Ripper. All of the bodies were posed post mortem and inspired by the seven deadly sins and a tarot deck. There were no open cases so it clearly shows whoever he is not going to stop until he gets the Ripper's attention. Can I just say you're the best thing that's ever happened to me. First me and now my best friend is also dating a hot psychiatrist."

Dr. Du Maurier understood Hannibal Lecter's fascination with Will Graham. It may have moved past the typical doctor-patient relationship but she knows from experience that it usually ends right in the middle of the scale.

A relationship between a professional and an officer sometimes lands more often in the realm of fiction and rarely happens in reality. The investigation will have a field day for TattleCrime to boost ratings no matter the outcome of the case.

Ms Lounds does have the knacks to circulate intriguing titles for the crimes she comes across and she's gonna love this one for sure. What either of them did not see was an anonymous informant outside across the street was intentionally snapping photos of them together huddling together and being close.

TattleCrime HQ

Freddie was piecing together the last bits on a story when she got an email notification. She opened it and her eyebrows were raised. An email from one of her followers sent attachment links. Photos of Dr. Du Maurier with a woman. Possibly her lover. She scoffed. This was obviously blackmail to ruin someone's reputation, much less a psychiatrist of all people.

Ms Lounds replied back indicating she was not interested in posting photos of someone's private affairs without consent. Crime blogs were her bread and butter, gossip was not.

The proprietor finally agreed to hand over the photos to the police if they could reveal who paid them to take photos. There was a catch, they had not only photos of Dr Du Maurier but more of Dr. Lecter. A lot of them.

Freddie agreed to the deal. She was sent another email and this time it made her cuss out. Dr. Lecter and a man appearing to be late thirties were shown to be dining in a very expensive restaurant. Their body language symbolizes casual and intimate and it's very obvious to see the heart eyes they were making at each other. From what she had gathered, it seems that the other man was someone she had crossed paths with before. Knew his name but decided it was not her place to spill the beans on a possible suggested affair.

Whoever paid the man surely had his target set on Dr. Lecter. The woman surely was not blind to see the credible psychiatrist have an almost devoted fan base of females and males. A man of his age group had to have left a string of hearts behind and an Energizer Bunny sex drive of an enthusiastic adult.

Whichever the cause was, it opened her eyes to notice that *the* Hannibal Lecter had a stalker. A person who wants to be in the other man's shoes. To be admired, loved and be soiled in the vast of money. He did slice a lot of tape to hire an investigator to tail two couples who have something in common but it was Hannibal who the man was seeking.

Downloading the photos onto her USB drive, she stored it into a mantilla envelope and stashed into her purse.

Not only was this blackmail, it already became extortion. The tipper digitally handed her a platter of salacious gossip all in one link. She was supposed to be posting the latest piece on the blog when this piled onto her. There was a choice: put the photos online for the entire city to see or call authorities particularly the FBI. Lounds picked up her phone and dialed. The other line answered and the redhead said, "I need to speak to Will Graham."

Chapter End Notes

Social:

Twitter: @0509macias

Tumblr: sorcereress-power-23

Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

> Trigger Warning: Attempted SA on Hannibal by Frankyln. You have been warned.
> Cassian is modeled after queer actor/icon Lee Pace

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will' house

Mr Graham entered the key into the lock and walked inside leaving the door open for Abigail to haul the trout they had caught in the early morning hours. A dark shadow constricted its arms around his neck, the younger man struggled to fight it. He was released for a moment but then was struck in the head with a blunt object rendering him unconscious.

Abigail came inside and screamed a blood curdling scream at seeing her surrogate father lying unresponsive. Pulling out her phone, she contacted Beverly and the authorities. They arrived with paramedics on standby wheeling him inside and dashing to the hospital.

John Hopkins Medical Center

Death was peaceful, easy. Life was harder. "*Will? Can you hear me?"* A female voice asking echoed. His vision blurred as he opened his eyes carefully. He felt groggy as if someone had bashed something on him over and over.

“Mom?” he answered weakly. His throat sounded as if it were drenched in sandpaper for a while. “Hey kiddo. How are you feeling?” She gently squeezed her son’s hand in reassuring comfort. The monitor connecting his IV was beeping silently to let the medication do its job in warding off infection.

“Wha-what happened?” He asked. His memory is a bit cracked but not shattered from the blow to remember how he got here. Someone hid at his place and knocked him out. He wanted to find out who but he needed to rest and allow his body to heal for the time being. “Abigail found you and called the police. Is there anything you need?”

“Where’s Hannibal?” Will asked. The throbbing from the hit was the last thing on his mind. He wanted the man who has entrapped his heart to be here with him. “I called him. He’s on his way. Get some sleep okay?” She got up from the chair and left the room leaving her only child to get some space from all of the ordeal he endured. He slightly nodded and closed his eyes and allowed the distant low hum to pull him into a clear cold stream.

The aroma of something awoke Will. “Smells delicious,” he muttered, stirring. He sits up in bed as Hannibal pops the lid on a second Tupperware allowing the steam to escape a rich

amber broth. “Silkie chicken. A monochrome bird prized in China for its medicinal value since the 7th century. With wolf berries, ginseng, ginger, red dates and star anise.”

He offers a supportive smile. Of course he did. The older gentlemen sat near his partner and said, “Your mother explained to me what occurred. It worries me these incidents are increasing more by the hour. Has anyone followed you or Beverly the day prior?”

“Beverly did text me that she saw someone spying on her and Bedelia. Someone is keeping close tabs not only on us but those who are acquainted and know about our relationship. I have my suspicions. Dolerhyde was with his wife at their lake house and Tobias was with a female colleague. Their alibis check out and Freddie was working so she’s cleared too.”

Hannibal was now truthfully concerned for his partner’s safety. Since ceasing all contact with his former patient, there was no doubt he too was being observed, by whom he did not have answers.

A knock made the duo look to see a well built man with dark hair holding a portfolio. “Sir, this just came in.” Handing the portfolio over to his employer, the other man carefully looked through every follicle, every microscopic detail surrounding their every move. His home, his office, Will’s place among other locations they’ve visited.

A second knock on the door had Beverly enter to deliver her findings. “I hate to be the bearer of bad news but there’s more.” She handed Will a stack of evidence photos showing the attack on him. The words ‘WHORE’ were written on his chest with another revealing a crushed violin with its broken strings hiding a bloody message with the letters ‘DIE BITCH’ at the concert hall and his car was vandalized and spray painted with a slur.

“Is there anything you can remember about the attack?”

“I blacked out. I was in and out and my head was bleeding. It all happened so fast, I didn’t see or hear anything.” All of them agreed in silence at seeing how exhausted he looked, reeling from an attack that was intended with a motive behind it. Beverly and Cassian exited leaving the couple alone for the second time.

“So is Cassian someone you know?”

“He works for a private security firm that has been with my family for some time. He’s resourceful.”

Hiring a professional temporary bodyguard to protect me? Looks like I’ll be under surveillance for a while until this is settled. Will thought as he interconnected what he could gather from the information that was given.

They ate in silence hence speaking with their actions rather than words made it comfortable. As normal as Will could handle right now, having his boyfriend in the moment soothed the profiler’s anxiety. “I’m guessing I’m staying here for a day or two more. This may sound odd but I’m glad you’re here with me.”

The older man knelt in front of his lover and said, “The assailant may have information on your residence and it appears you may have to live in my home for the time being. I am deeply ashamed for not protecting you.”

“It wasn’t your fault. I was assaulted simply because of me involving myself with you and whoever is doing this is gonna have to try really hard to separate us. This..us..it’s not going away.”

Hearing this made Hannibal’s heart wither a bit in hearing his love describe the intense emotions he was exhibiting due to their affair. He was not afraid, he didn’t want to see anyone he cared about get hurt. “Are you certain about your decision darling?” asked the doctor.

“I am and why wouldn't I be? I’m not backing down just because someone wants me out of the picture. I’m making my point clear that I am not going anywhere and I’m not leaving you.”

“Defending my honor. How unexpected.” The doctor smirked in amusement. No words could express what his heart was feeling. No one previously in any one of his affairs wanted something long term. He hardly had anyone fight his battles ever until Will landed at his feet like an holy offering to an all powerful deity.

“I must return to my office. I will come back tomorrow with Abigail. Rest well.” He said to Will while touching his partner’s cheek, memorizing how his skin reacted to his touch. He silently left his partner’s room and left the premises.

When he was gone, Will felt the urge to sleep the rest of the afternoon only to move to go use the restroom and back into bed he went. It was all so overwhelming to have a stranger order a hit on him. Why attack him and not Hannibal? What do they stand to gain? He put those questions aside and let his steps guide him into the serene cool waters of the stream.

Hannibal’s office

Dr Lecter was speaking with his surrogate daughter. His manner of tone changed when he was with his beloved or Abigail. It sounded reserved but maintained a curiosity that had not appeared since childhood.

“How are your studies coming along?”

“It’s amazing so far. I’d never realized the Roman Empire had bloodlines much extensive than historians originally thought. I’m moving towards the Renaissance and I may need help with Latin.” Abigail spoke on the other side of the line.

“Mischa will aid you and I will help you when I come home. See you soon.” She replied “Bye” and the call ended silencing the office once again.

He looked at the time to see his next appointment. Franklyn. His previous encounter with him made him a bit resentful since due to the interruption of him spending personal time with

Will in his office. He never harbored any inferior intention for any of his patients since choosing this path. Franklyn, however, was everything he secretly disliked. His clingy behavior was a red flag from the moment he was put into his care. The manners he showed clearly insisted he had a severe attachment to show off a fantasized version of himself that did not exist, interacted with those who were of a higher status and dressed himself in a style similar to that of his own.

The man had no doubt in wanting to be his friend. He made it clear time and time again but it kept feeding into the fantasy more and more with no avail. This will be the last he will see of him.

“I’m sorry Franklyn but you are seeing another doctor. I cannot continue surveying your therapy from this moment on.”

“You’re giving me a referral? You were a referral!” He spat back with bitterness at being dropped from someone he highly admired. “You are no longer a patient. Do I make myself clear?” The doctor kept his voice low yet it carried slight venom simmering beneath.

Franklyn scoffed angrily. “Will wanted to abandon you because he never loved you and I wanted him to leave because I didn’t want you to end up with anyone else!” The psychiatrist could understand the moot of the stage. It reached far too high. “Why would you do that?”

“I was dying of jealousy! You broke my heart when you started seeing him. A man who despises you, who lies to you and will never love you in the way that I do!” The man dropped to his knees attempting to crawl which made the doctor step back in disgust.

“Mr Froideveaux, you do not wish to know me.” His voice lowered with no intention to hold back his distaste. Franklyn kept going until his hand brushed the inner seam of his slacks to which Hannibal with gracefulness kicked him in the nose in self defense hurling the man backwards until the door opened from the other side. Cassian asked, “Dr Lecter, are you all right sir?”

“Remove Mr Froideveaux at once.” He ordered his beloved’s bodyguard to haul his assailant away. A few moments later, Cassian returned asking a second time, "Are you sure you’re alright?”

The man arranged his clothing while trying to take in what just happened. “N-no. I am going to file charges. And Cassian?”

“Yes sir?”

“When Will is released from the hospital, bring him to my residence immediately. I will explain everything to him.”

“Of course sir. What about Mr Froideveaux?” He pointed and steered his head towards the open door. “I have someone who will make certain he knows his place. Come, let us notify the police.”

Baltimore Police Department

“He assaulted you?” The detective asked Dr Lecter while Cassian with arms behind his back stood by.

“That is correct. Mr Froideveaux was a former patient of mine. His medical history indicated he was transferred on multiple incidents by nine previous psychiatrists, myself included.”

“So is it fair to say that he was and is obsessed with you?” The officer asked with a calmness most policemen did not obtain in this line of employment.

“Yes. I stayed in control of my boundaries while Franklyn was repeatedly seeking my attention in hopes of earning my approval.”

“Did he make sexual advances towards you at all before today?

“Unfortunately, no.” The investigator moved a bit forward in posture before asking the million dollar question. “Can you think of any reason Franklyn would be angry with you? A relationship perhaps? It’s part of the protocol and very important I request permission.”

“My personal and professional relations outside are confidential. But since it is a matter of public record, I am seeing someone if that answers your questions. Does the name Will Graham come to mind?”

“The prolier who worked the Shrike case for the FBI. He’s your lover?”

“More of a partner so to speak. We’ve been involved for quite some time. We both consented to see each other more than once. He is currently in the hospital after sustaining an injury this morning.”

The officer collected the documents and arranged them into a file. “I will notify my boss and begin the paperwork for a restraining order. If he threatens Will or anyone you know, we’ll arrest him. Thank you for coming in, Doctor.”

Parting ways with the investigator, Hannibal left the building with Cassian following behind. The older man reached his home. Exiting his vehicle, he walked over and discussed with Will’s temporary protector on how to proceed following the event in his office an hour ago.

“Do you understand your orders?

“Yes.”

“Good. Guard Will with your life.”

Cassian uttered not a single syllable and silently drove off, returning to the hospital and being on duty outside Mr Graham’s room. Protecting his employer’s significant other was an oath he took to heart. Not many would choose an occupation like this; defending a respected physician’s partner while investigating a possible link to multiple homicides was far from anything he’d seen in his career. He hoped it would be the least of his concerns.

Hannibal's house

"...Francesco Petrarca was crowned Poet Laureate on the 6th of April, 1341, thus the Renaissance began." Mischa points to an illustration of a man dressed conservatively with a crown of olive branches adorning his head while holding a scripture in his right hand.

Abigail with her pencil wrote with efficacy marking key points. She had always wanted to know what was not taught, specifically peeling back the veil of greed and corruption in early human history. "I'm surprised this wasn't taught because of curriculum." She thought back to completing a world history course that did not go into detail of several European countries.

The sound of diminutive footsteps had the women look up to see Hannibal in a state of silence.

"Is something wrong?" Mischa asked. Her brow expressed worry if something dire occurred due to her brother's status as a medical expert. Abigail asked "Dad?" They guided him to the kitchen where they waited to see if he was willing to discuss the incident.

"Franklyn assaulted me. I pushed him away in self defense. I filed charges with the department. They will take care of the rest."

"Isn't he the one who caused a scene in your office a few days ago? Why would he be angry at Will and not you?" Abigail asked. Her thoughts were all over the place trying to piece how it all came to a halt.

"I fear my rejection of him has caused him to act impulsive resulting in Franklyn demanding a chance and nearly forcing himself on me. Cassian was able to remove him from the office for the moment but I still fear he will exact his revenge."

Mischa senses her anger come to a boil due to a patient whose desperation combined with an imagination to take a love that did not nor could not belong to him. She will have a chat with him. A 'stern' talk

"I have terminated all contact with Franklyn since then but it is only a matter of time before he seizes another opportunity to wreak havoc on those who hold no vendetta against him." Hannibal spoke with an almost frightened tone. A tone concealed since he was merely a child. With that, he retreated to his study, closing the door without saying a single word leaving his sister and surrogate daughter alone.

Mischa felt saddened in seeing her brother become more vulnerable since Will's attack. She may have not known the young professor too well but she could understand that he brought something out in her older sibling that had not been seen since. Life and happiness.

Franklyn's apartment

He felt discarded. Tossed to the side as if he were a used ornament after only one usage. It kills him to know he was not the one to wake up next to a man who had the world wrapped around his thumb. To be loved and desired and draped in vast wealth he could only imagine

only to have been given to someone undeserving of it. Someone who lives with animals, who does not understand what it means to be adored. Will Graham has ruined everything for him.

What did Hannibal see in him anyway? He was nothing. Plain, boring and unattractive to meddle and immerse himself in Dr Lecter's world of glamorous riches and beautiful people. He knew him far longer than Will did and somehow he was given the key to dress in the finest clothes, dine in the most exclusive restaurants and be the center of someone's heart.

A knock made the burly man get up, open the door and saw a sensual young woman in front of him. "Hello Franklyn. May I come in?" He stood there too stunned to speak in front of the gorgeous seductress. "S-sure, come on in." and let her pass into his dingy apartment. "I am sorry if the place is not to your standards."

"That's not why I'm here." She said, her eyes hid something secretive, almost mystical-like in nature. "Then why are you here?" He asked bewildered in her posture of being so calm in his less than fancy accommodation.

The woman turned with a single swing of her body and faced him, "Forgive me for not introducing myself. My name is Mischa. I know you who you are."

"Hannibal never said he had a family."

"It's Dr Lecter to you. And you do not have the authority to call him that. Are we clear?"

"You think I'm supposed to be scared? Will Graham doesn't love Hannibal. He doesn't care about him!" She walked closer, inches away from his face, "Threaten my family and you're in danger. If you come after my brother, I will rip you apart." before waving goodbye and leaving Franklyn frozen where he stood.

Chapter End Notes

Writing takes a lot of work but it is so worth it.

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

Here's the latest chapter. Trigger warning for slight discussions of Margot's abuse by Mason. You have been warned.

The Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network or RAINN is an American nonprofit anti-sexual assault organization, the largest in the United States. I thought it should be important to mention this real-life foundation and have Margot work there because I believe she would do well as a councilor and help women move forward. #WomensHistoryMonth

John Hopkins Medical Center

Will hauled his bag over his shoulder and took one last look at the room he stayed two days before. He was medically cleared to leave the hospital yet he still couldn't shake the feeling of the assault he sustained that morning.

Cassian knocked on the door before entering, "Are you ready to go Mr Graham?"

"Yeah, let's go." He said to his temporary bodyguard and left the grounds and onto the road the car went.

Meanwhile on the road

A soft *ping* had Will glanced down at his phone and saw a message from Hannibal. It read as followed;

Hannibal: Thank goodness, you're all right. There is something of utmost importance I need to speak to you about. I will see you at home. I miss you.

Will: I miss you too. See you at home.

Sending the text to his partner, Will senses a bit of relief having known one part of the investigation was passed, there were more clues to uncover about the killer. For now, he will be at his boyfriend's house for a needed rest and relaxation.

Aside from working his ass off on and off attempting to catch the so called 'Tarot Killer' Will forgot to take a break and let himself be taken care of by someone who gave a damn about his well being.

His mind brought him back to the night of the dinner. It had been his first night out in a long time. With a man no less. A man who could choose a million people and he chose him out of

everyone. He never had anyone take time off to spend a few hours with him and him only. Hannibal did that. Not just for him but for Will. It just seems not real to have a person willingly to put aside their day job and take care of someone who actually needs to ground themselves without going completely off the rails.

The car strolled effortlessly into the driveway parked flawlessly next to the Bentley. He cautiously walked with slow baby steps to ease dizziness from his injury forty eight hours prior. The door slowly opened to let him enter and saw Hannibal waiting for him.

Hannibal's home

The doctor offered his arm and led his partner to the master bedroom. He maneuvered Will cautiously avoiding wanting to bump into walls and cause further injury to his body than it already has.

Will eased himself onto the large comfy bed, fluffing the pillows underneath his head while Hannibal draped the covers over him to ward off the chill. He thanked whichever deity had protected Will while he was recuperating. He didn't hide from God, he relished in it.

He felt his heart had rejoined its other half in solidarity knowing he was alive and letting him rest in his home was all the comfort he needed. Hannibal quietly walked down the stairs to prepare his guest a well cooked meal.

The scent of chamomile awoke Will's senses sometime an hour later. The faint aroma gave the young man a bit of strength to sit up, tossing the covers aside to lift himself up and walk down the stairs one step at a time. It led him to the kitchen where he saw Hannibal pouring tea into an antique porcelain cup. The older gentlemen met Will's with a hint of a smile. He felt a light hand on his shoulder and noticed Abigail offered her sympathy without saying anything. She dressed something a little closer to what she typically wore but updated it a teeny bit to signify her place in this new life she'd slowly gained accustomed to. Her dark auburn hair toned in light loose waves to accumulate the maturity of a woman rather than an adolescent. It suited her well.

"Any nightmares at all?"

He shook his head, "None whatsoever. Thank you for letting me stay." as he drank the tea sip by sip letting the tea soothe the mild throbbing of his head.

"My pleasure. The human body can only do so much to itself until it truly needs help."

The younger man did agree with that sentence. It fortunately came at the right time. The time was now to forget about the case and give permission to be looked after even if it was for a short period of time. He needed to feel like himself. To sense he really was there and not an apparition.

He mirrored the exact hand movement Hannibal did the night of their first date. Will did not understand why he was granted consent to come and go in this larger than life home. It

seemed intrusive to invade one's privacy, however it was reversed because of Hannibal Lecter wanting him to and not due to policy. It solely was based on the feelings the two men brought out in each other.

Will previously believed that all of what Dr Lecter was doing for him was playing games to warp his brain farther towards catastrophe. He thought wrong on everything. An attractive doctor with a hidden life is enough to intrigue a crowd and Will became the ambrosia gifted to a god.

"It doesn't add up as to why Frankyln is adamant in wanting to be in your life. From your perspective, it sounds as if he is trying to squirm his way in and take Will's place. He is forging a replica of himself to appease and earn a spot in the elitism. I may not be a doctor but it could be a case of narcissism combined with erotomania."

"Can you be a bit more specific?" Will asked calmly. Abigail sure is learning quicker and his mind surely needed to absorb the definition.

"Franklyn is all about appearances. The change to more sophisticated clothing, the mannerisms and social circle all indicate a desire to be noticed. His need to show his 'love' bluntly nearly forces himself on someone who is uninterested in him neither sexually or romantically attracted to him, pointing to an unhinged fatal obsession with Hannibal." The young lady said in an almost scholar-y manner.

The profiler just could not wrap his brain on how someone so normal would have a desire to be a part of something that did not want him. It baffled him since then and much so now. "I need to show Frankyln that I am not stepping aside. If he wants to start a rivalry then let it begin."

Hannibal did not see this side of Will. Protective of himself. The lamb is no longer weak and fragile. Defending something that belonged to him that no else could have. Something they foolishly believe could acquire without understanding a clue. Prey turns into predator.

"I assumed the discussion can be withdrawn for now. I have an announcement. My parents will be arriving from Lithuania along with my uncle Robert and two other members of the family for a visit and I wish to introduce the both of you." said Hannibal a bit proudly while his partner and surrogate daughter with their eyes produced a bit of shock but no less surprised at this revelation.

Well this took a turn Abigail thought at the idea of being greeted by her surrogate father's extended family. She just was a mundane girl living life as anyone should, then it nearly snatched her away. Swimming through an abyss of darkness, of nothingness. Inches of reaching for the light in the darkness, grasping it and holding onto it until reaching the safe haven she now calls home. A home with someone who was twice the man her actual biological father could ever be while the other showed sympathy and complexity towards spending time with Hannibal and her as a family not born by blood but by strength and compassion.

"Is there going to be a dinner party? Or another social event like an opera or ballet?"

“Well, the dinner party will mainly be just my family and the second will be a social event. Hence your appearance is optional.” Will and Abigail looked at each other then at their host. They both nodded answering ‘yes’ to the invitation of making their long awaited debut.

The next morning

Will took Abigail with him to spend the day with him at Quantico while Dr Lecter worked and busied himself with patients.

He knew there were invisible eyes analyzing his every move inside and outside. Word spread like wildfire through the halls of the Behavioral Science Unit particularly his students who were eager to know but refrain from asking those kinds of questions about him at all and letting him do the talking and give his opinion on his side of what exactly is going on between Dr Lecter and himself when he’s ready.

The lecture he was presenting on cold cases and the lessons he’d taken from Mischa on how to approach conversations regarding the intellect of remorseful minds worked rather well. In fact it may have worked a little too well. When it ceased and the class left, Will took off his glasses, rubbing his eyes and wiping away the exhaustion of staying at the hospital a few days earlier.

Abigail handed him a steel bottle filled with water to hydrate his body. He handed it back to her and began pulling files from his briefcase. He arranged them, connecting all the bits of data from the lab and his handwritten notes from each one of the crime scenes. Abigail came to stand next to him and look at the pieces of the puzzle.

“What are you looking for?” She asked with a slightly browsed expression.

“The truth.” He said while his eyes scanned all over the photos. Each of the victims were stalked without knowing the identity of the killer.

“Here’s someone who immerses himself in another world then destroys the very people he’s trying to imitate. The big question is why?”

“Maybe he has an unrequited love that will never live up to his expectations. That could be the trigger of why he chose his victims.”

Will glanced at the young woman with a ‘I’m proud of you’ twinkle in his eyes. He’s inserted himself in her heart as well as Hannibal’s and he intends to let her heart have room for more than one person.

“Do you believe that Franklyn could be capable of doing this? I mean he appears harmless and somehow something seems creepy about him. All he ever talks about Hannibal as if he were a celestial divine god.” Abigail pointed out her observation on her fingers. A light bulb went off in her brain as if she had a brilliant albeit questionable idea.

“How soon can we get a warrant on Franklyn’s history from all nine of his former psychiatrists?”

Will's house

Dahlia was overlooking a few current files from several cases she'd worked abroad the last couple of years when she heard a crash coming from the living room. Rushing over, she'd noticed the window busted and cracked. A rock was thrown through as a warning sign. She crouched down to examine it. A wadded roll of paper was strung around it. Unstringing it Layla unveiled what was written. It read as followed:

Your son messed with the wrong man. He will get what's coming to him.

The woman yanked her phone from the back pocket and dialed frantically. It took a few moments for the call to be transferred. A female voice answered from the other side and asked "Hello?"

"Beverly?"

"What's going on Dahlia?"

"The front window is broken and by the looks of it someone threw a rock to make it seem like a burglary. Please let Will know."

The other woman answered with an affirmative calmness. "I will. Be careful." and the call ended. Dark chills stung her skin with a coldness that permeated invisibly without leaving a mark. She worried for Will when he admitted he was being watched by a stalker who envied not only him but also his relationship with a man who had wealth, a history of romantic entanglements and a life most people would love to have within their grasp.

Grabbing her keys, she jumped into her car and drove with a little more force than she'd normally would drive on any given day. The vehicle paused at the entrance to Quantico, she rushed inside avoiding bumping into students or employees. Reaching the hall where her son taught his lectures, she soon spotted Will and Abigail whom Dahlia had grown to care for like a second child.

Will saw her out of the corner of his eye and asked, "Mom, what are you doing here? Has something happened?" The older woman quietly jogged to deliver the note intended for him.

He read it word for word. The killer is starting to push his buttons a bit further now. Hounding him accelerated to threatening harm against him all because of Hannibal favoring him above all of those who came prior. Will was not the possessive type to show ownership but this time he will display affection just enough to rile anger and infuriate this so-called beyond lovesick admirer.

The fisherman wasn't going anywhere anytime soon. Someone will get lured and baited.

Beverly's house

Bedelia was sprawled on her back. Her exhilarating blue eyes were shown to have that blissful look of being given pleasure when she needed something to take her mind off. The indigo bed sheets were tucked around her body to conceal her slender form. Not that she wanted to wander around her lover's house with no clothes on and surprise her. She had that ideal classic modesty of being old fashioned but enough fluidity with her body to drive men and women mad with wanting her in their bed. Sadly she turned them down with courtesy and respect of a woman in a field typically dominated by men in favor of one Beverly Katz.

Her darling lady love entered her bedroom with a glass of water to quench her thirst of having Bev satisfy her as she did when they become involved intimately. The first time they psychically made love was an out of this world euphoria. The sensation of feeling a woman's fingers caressing another's breasts with a ghost-like touch, tracing her nails down her body, gently holding down her hips while slowly feasting on her sex as if it were the most rich luscious dessert. It certainly felt as both women's souls left their mortal tombs and ascended into a higher level of spirituality in embracing this all consuming passion.

The Asian woman placed a few light kisses on her shoulder as a sign of aftercare but mostly happy knowing the goddess in her bed didn't want to leave and having found someone who would not turn away because of her preferences in women. It had taken a sufficient amount of time to accept the love they feel for each other.

"Something on your mind babe?"

The blonde haired woman turned her head a bit to nuzzle into the warmth of Beverly's body. "What did you say that man's name was?"

"Whose?"

"The man who came by Hannibal's office the day after Will was attacked. Have you seen him before?"

"No I haven't. I do know from what Will told me is that his name is Franklyn and he's *obsessed* with Dr Lecter. He made a scene a week ago when he saw them together in his office. Is that important?"

Bedelia reached over to the table and grabbed her phone. She clicked into her contacts, pressed a number and waited for the caller to answer. "This is Dr Du Mauier. I need to speak with.."

"..Yes, fax them to me right away. Thank you." She ended the call to which Beverly asked, "Had some help?" and placed a steamy kiss to Bedelia's lips and guided her back onto the bed.

Verger Estate

Alana was taking a stroll in the garden with Margot who filled her in what was going on with the investigation. "A former patient inappropriately assaulted Hannibal in his office. But not before he dropped him and gave no further notice in answering his questions about Will."

“So then Will was attacked and placed in the hospital shortly thereafter?” She asked her wife whose eyes did all the responding.

The brunette then replied, “He’s staying at Hannibal’s place for now. And Abigail is doing okay. I can understand what she’d been through although her father was no doubt cruel..just not as inhumane as Mason was. I will never forgive him for what he did to me. Whatever hell he’s in, he damn fucking deserves it.” Her wife rubbed circles on Margo’s arm comforting her as she recounts the horrific abuse she suffered at the hands of her sadistic brother. How he picked on and inappropriately harassed her to the point she decided to fight back with not just words to control but actions that proved far worse.

His death in a strange way brought relief to Margot who used the family inheritance to connect with the victims her brother targeted and sought to enter counseling along with securing employment at RAINN. It troubled Alana a bit as a psychiatrist to listen to women speak every single detail of the events and aftermath of their emotional and mental being.

She had never anticipated falling for another person much less a woman after all the shit she’d endured. Her background of being wealthy surely would attract a line of potential suitors from all over and try winning her hand. These days anyone with money regardless of origin can either flaunt their riches or run a Ponzi scheme to thwart off investors of millions. There was a saying; *Be careful who you trust. S*he’d been weary of it since involving herself with Alana.

She kept coming back to the crime scene photo copies plus the cryptic message that Will sent to her via text. *We’re all being watched.* Is he referring to being stalked? Whatever the case, he seemed worried about the people he knew specifically himself who carried events close to the vest.

Margot’s phone pinged. Looking down, she saw a text from an unidentified number that was not Will’s or anyone she personally contacted within the last few days. It read as follows; *Put on your toe shoes Margot. It’s going to be hard to dance your way out of this one.* The attachment linked to the text had just become her worst nightmare. They were stills from an intimate video they made to spice things up in the bedroom. *This was very very bad.*

Alana turned the phone towards her. The color of her cheeks turned blood red, she was enraged that someone hacked into their system, stole a personal file and threatened to post it. Did they get off on watching people’s lives shattered by their secrets? It sounds as if they enjoy inflicting pain whether psychologically or emotionally to no avail and no remorse.

A second message followed with a harrowing warning; *Think on your sins. How far will you go to protect your loved ones?*

Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

> I apologize for a month hiatus. I just got back into reading books again. Enjoy. Leave a kudo if liked.

Frankyln's apartment

A man knocked on the door with a less than stellar attitude. More of an annoyance to be here than his office. "Mr Fredioux, I need to talk with you."

"I have information that you'll want to hear. It's about Dr Lecter." The sound of a lock reversing itself and opening with a snail-like manner. Frankyln's eyes peered from behind asking, "You know Dr Lecter?"

"It's best if we discuss this inside. Please." The man gestured to being granted permission to enter and Franklyn allowed him.

Once inside the apartment, the stranger turned around to face him. "Back to my question, how well do you know Dr Lecter?"

"Let's say we have a history. A competitive one so to speak."

"So you envied him. Except he always came out on top."

"Precisely. You and I are the same. The obstacle standing between two people who have each other." Franklyn's face frowned "What do you mean?"

"I know that you are in love with Hannibal. So much so that you are willing to do whatever it takes to have that lifestyle of wealth and power."

"Do you have a vendetta against Dr Lecter? Why are you so intent on destroying him?" The doctor smirked and said, "I only have an intent to make him understand that not everything revolves around him and he didn't deserve all the credit just because he was born with money. I deserved all the hard work in medical school. Not Hannibal Lecter."

"You want payback for a rivalry that occurred during your school days. It doesn't sound like a motive for murder.'

"See that's where you're wrong Franklyn. I can help you achieve the dream you desperately want. I understand that you attacked Will. Not to kill him but to injure him and make yourself the nice guy to get him in your grasp. He has everything you want: A supporting parent, a good job and budding relationship filled with all the attention and status."

All of the fragments of his interactions with both Dr Lecter and Will came flooding back like a rushed montage.

The way Hannibal looked at him like he was the most beautiful creature to exist angered him.

How comfortable they were dining in one of the city's exclusive establishments irritated his self worth.

Showered with rare high priced gifts and clothes that should've belonged to him instead of an antisocial dog loving pretty boy. Will Graham was nothing. Not entitled to be shown wondrous glorious things. He will make sure of it.

"I just don't understand why Han- Dr Lecter prefers his company over mine. He and I share the same interests but it's not enough. I am curious to know what Mr Graham's secret is to place a spell on Hannibal and make him fall hopelessly in love with him." Franklyn while running his fingers frantically through his hair. A clear sign of his narcissism carefully rising but not at its peak. That event would come soon after he put everything together in place and waited in the shadows.

"He does go both ways. And by the looks of it, Dr Lecter does have an affinity for beautifully gifted individuals. No wonder he chose Will, I mean he's good-looking and can think like a killer and unfortunately you're none of those things Frankyln. But I can help with that as long as I can cooperate."

"What exactly do you have in mind?"

Will's house

Mr Graham sat cross legged in his living room with his pack. All seven dogs sat obediently while their owner opened a kennel containing a stray he founded last night wandering in the woods nearby.

The dog had a coat a bit thicker than Buster's and thinner than Winston's. The color of her fur was a deep rich mahogany. Pointed black-tipped ears with a sturdy well muscled body along with a distinct black mask along her jawline and snout.

He noticed she got along well with everyone, particularly Buster who kept nuzzling into her side to gain warmth from her due to him being smaller than the others but could hold his own.

She hadn't been given a name yet. Best to let her be accumulated before deciding which one suited her the most. He wondered what Hannibal might say when he sees her.

Impressed he would be by her mannerisms and defensive technique. Will was happy that he brought her into his home and could not imagine she would not last another night. He had a soft spot for animals, particularly dogs. Any creature that came across him would demand his

attention and he would give it to them with pets and praises. It's his affinity to live just far enough from the city that he enjoyed the company of living things rather than humans. He understood them a bit more than the occasional veterinarian who'd be surprised with his attitude.

His mind kept rewinding and stopped when this-affair, relationship, courtship, whatever he wanted to call it started. The day after having dinner at Hannibal's, gifts began to appear. And not just run of the mill standard gifts. Italian leather gloves and so on, basically a whole closet filled with it. Expansive. Made from high quality material from an era long past and still thriving. He at first considered returning them, seeing it as too generous from someone who is revered, protected, and ranked in the second highest form of royalist society He soon had a change of heart.

It never occurred to him that Hannibal began to see him outside of office hours aside from simply discussing cases but to spend a considerable amount of time building their friendship. From co-workers to forming an emotional bond seeping into a romantic connection solely based on equal footing and a longing to feel that all powerful grip of someone's soul in his own hands. It frightened him as an adult to openly admit his feelings to someone else much less a man. A man who can crush his opponents with his sharp wit and impeccable physique.

It just seems not correct to pursue a relationship because of his job but more due to his gift. All of his emotions the last month broke from the bottle: *Feeling internally alive whenever Hannibal's gaze wandered over his body when he wasn't looking. Being praised with devotion and lavished with adoration than he could ever imagine. It sent a tingle down his spine.*

The tip of his tongue traced his lips still feeling the last time Hannibal kissed him. The way he kisses felt as if he knew how to leave his lovers breathless, pining for more than a simple lip lock. Few had the opportunity to bed the handsome psychiatrist and live to talk about it or disclose it never happened. Whatever the results, Dr Lecter had a plethora of knowledge of the human body in medicinal and carnal to which Will understood his boyfriend exceeded in satisfying pushing past the teachings of the *Kama Sutra* and leaving one night stands wordless not muttering a sound.

With him, it was different. The courting was pretty much the same except it was more personal and intimate. They were taking time to communicate in a coded language created only for their eyes to decipher. Subtle gestures spoke more meaning than grand cliche displays. It may seem old fashioned but it was genuinely safer than hounding someone to date them.

The murders were calling him back in. Each kill had a clear indication of someone who knew exactly what they were doing. Disarticulated with no hint of regret or remorse. A sense of a need to outrank the Chesapeake Ripper but why? He precisely knew who to call.

Quantico

Will inhaled deeply, closed his eyes and allow the dream to flourish:

The flickering lights of the hallway sensed a vibration of guilt and darkness. When he reached what looked to be an OR, he was shocked at what he saw.

Hannibal's body lay surrounded by pools of blood. His body bruised beyond recognition, a large incision carved into his chest where his heart would've been was empty and hollow. The organ rested next to his corpse. Will cradled him weeping softly before letting out a wailing screech loud enough to open the fiery gates of hell.

"Will?" The profiler was brought back from his nightmare by a calloused hand on his shoulder. "Was I asleep?"

"Your eyes were open but you were not present. Do you need to rest?" Hannibal asked. The profiler shook his head. I'm okay. What do we know about Franklyn's previous psychiatrists?" while organizing copies of documents from all eight including Hannibal.

Beverly cleared her throat. "Nothing overtly violent. Just declarations of wanting to be friends and so on. You get the picture."

Abigail on the other hand scanned the most recent file while saying, "It still doesn't explain why he's so content on having Hannibal for himself. Maybe he's a parasite."

The others looked at her as if she found the needle in the haystack. "Think about it. Franklyn has fantasized this life where he solely believes he and Hannibal are meant to be. But what makes him different is that he is willing to commit an act of violence after being pushed to his limit because Will has something he can never have."

"And what precisely is that Abigail?" The young woman pointed to her well dressed surrogate father and whispered, "You."

Will tried to grasp his daughter's idea of the case and asked, "So what you're saying is that he absorbs whatever comes out of the other person's mouth and somehow his mind twists it into a false statement. He claims that he's entitled to every single aspect of your life and based on his behavior towards Will so far backs up Abigail's theory."

"Well, we have one other possibility. The murders could be a copycat of the Chesapeake Ripper or someone who thinks he's better at killing than he is. It sounds crazy but it could be a clue."

"He has an accomplice. A minion who only did what he wanted, the rest was done up to the Tarot Killer. They're working together." Will said while all eyes looked upon him.

Beverly sighed, "I can dig for more information. If I find anything, I'll let you know." She quietly left the lecture hall leaving Will along with his boyfriend and their daughter.

"This case keeps getting more and more complicated than I realized. We really don't know the identity of the Tarot Killer. By the way he kills, there are signs of torture perhaps psychological? Killing his victims was the ultimate power trip. And if he is a sadist, he enjoyed it and he'll want more."

The sound of a phone ringing had the psychiatrist quickly answer with Will and Abigail still in the room. When it was over, Hannibal answered with a single sentence. “That was Chiyoh. She uncovered something that can be useful to the investigation.”

“Who is Chiyoh?” Abigail asked with reasoning.

“My aunt’s personal handmaiden. She’s been with us for a long time. She is very protective of me.” His eyes told respect and wisdom as he mentioned her.

“It looks like your family is bigger than we thought. And we’re the new meat to be fed.” Will’s perfectly timed pun caught Hannibal’s attentive gaze. A smirk made him grin all because of his partner’s allegory to being presented to his parents as a suitable match. A perfect match indeed.

Will’s eyes met his. Seeing him smile was a truly rare occurrence to witness. Were there other things he could do to see Hannibal truly happy? He never made anyone he previously was involved comfortable with in his presence. They usually leave without an explanation regardless whether if it was his fault or not. It just happens and he’s learned to live with it all his life until now. He finally now has someone who is baring himself to him and has a relationship. The kind of romance that he never expected could happen to someone like him. An empath whose capacity to delve into corrupt minds, to think like them and uncover things that no person would ever want to hear without feeling nauseous. Will thinks it’s bad luck etched onto him that he can’t scrub it out but maybe it was a different kind of luck. Aligning himself with Hannibal Lecter is the least of his worries.

What concerns even more was how they were going to catch the Tarot Killer without a well devised plan. With Hannibal and Abigail by his side, their plan is just getting started.

Will’s house

After his class was dismissed and the lecture ceased, Will quietly drove home. When he arrived, his pack were eager to greet him with pets and smiles. The young prolifer went inside to loosen the outer layers of his coat to just a cotton one that he normally wears when he’s just home by himself.

Pouring himself a glass of whiskey while his dogs followed him around the house gave Will some kind of relief but not the type of relief he wanted. Being back in his own territory after staying at Hannibal’s home for a few days to recuperate from the accident felt nice and he sensed that he belonged there. A guy like him shouldn’t be granted nor allowed to wander a stranger’s home let alone if said stranger was a good-looking doctor who's near immortal-like appearance has men thinking how can one man retain perfect bone structure his entire life and age so gracefully. It piqued Will’s interest too. He had not harbored any feelings for anyone prior to Hannibal. Relationships were not his forte and this time someone he cherished was not running off in rejecting but accepting him as he is.

His heart paced a little quicker than normal when he thought of him. A lethal dangerous predator in human form. Selective of his prey to satiate his pallet and invoke his wrath on

unsuspecting mortals who questioned his ability of the hunt.

The winter chill of the road under his clothed feet did not stung him one bit. Snow fell gently amid the bleak darkness of the night and the moon to guide. The crystals in his hair never faded but enhanced his beauty. His eyes shone like ripples of water mixed with the earthiness of pine.

A warm puff of air behind his shoulder made Will turn to see the Ravenstag appear at his side. The animal steered its head nuzzling him to which the man reciprocated. The eyes of said beast then centered on a silhouette. The man's eyes followed as he walked beside his guide. The taste of their prey's blood is already watering his senses and lighting up neurons. The feast will be a delight.

He realized that he was meeting his partner for a very important dinner. The thought almost left his brain and caused him to nearly trip on his feet for goodness's sake. Maintaining balance, Will quickly paced into the bathroom shedding his clothes and leaving them in the hamper.

The semi warm temperature soothed his skin a bit. Uneasiness clouded his mind for a minute. He and Hannibal have not known each other for long. However it felt good to be noticed and loved. That is what matters to him. Being appreciated as admired and cared for and not some plaything to be used once and never seen again. It was more than that. Inescapable. Alluring and sensual at the same time.

Driving down the road in autumn towards his heart's desire and taking chances on a love that's worth fighting to keep.

Hanibal's house

This was it. Tonight he and Abigail would be introduced to Hannibal's family. To gain the blessing from the count and contessa who bore a legacy stepped in devotion and honor. A formal blessing that will alter the very course of his life. There was no going back. He'd always understood he was destined to wander alone for all eternity without someone. Fate proved him wrong once again.

People have begun to envy Will seemingly out of nowhere. Greetings from his students, friendly pats from his friends and tender praises from his partner. He was never given affection from a romantic significant other in his younger years due to his injured shoulder when he was a rookie officer back in New Orleans and because of it no connection came. Until Hannibal came along.

Will thought of himself as a scared shy lamb in a den of lions. The lion in turn did not consume the lamb as prey but as an equal. Half of his soul as the poets say. If one falls, both fall together. Though he tried to resist, Will still wants Hannibal. A man with charm is a very dangerous thing.

If he'd be given the grueling choice of risking his own survival to save a life, he'd do it in a heartbeat. He would die for Hannibal as Hannibal would do the same for him. Achilles's

despair of losing Patroclus frightened the gods so much that his wish came true for his ashes to be alongside him in death and reunite in the afterlife. A tragic tale indeed. He understood the parallels between a one thousand year old myth and his romance with Hannibal. Love begins and end lovers.

The attire he chose was something hidden in his own closet. Something he picked out for himself. He hoped it would make an impression. He had no doubt it would be perfect from Hannibal's charismatic point of view. His car parked next to Hannibal's Bentley alongside several other vehicles the man never seen before. *Those probably cost more than my paycheck.* Will thought to himself as he walked up the steps and answered with the brass knocker.

The door opened to see his partner dressed as he always did. Sleek, effortless and sophisticated he was. Sometimes Will often pictured his partner as the Devil. To twas no secret given the persona he embodied. A well tailored person suit. Crafted for his consumption only. Suited with the finest tailors known to man. Creating a living breathing god that no man could escape from. It is a terrible idea to flee from someone who can destroy a mundane however they deemed fit. Humans were no different than animals. They were greedier. Hungry for power and then abuse it in atrocious and heinous ways to control prey and keep them in line.

"Welcome Will. Please come in." And he entered the lair of his master.

Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

Sorry for another month long hiatus. Enjoy.

Hannibal's house

As soon the door closed softly behind Will, he felt his partner's hands remove his coat with a delicacy so light, he felt as if he had been touched by sin. A dark brooding hypnotic being with the intelligence of angels and the beauty of a devil. *God help me* he thought, still feeling the warmth from Hannibal's hands seep past his jacket and into his skin like a whispered caress.

"If it were up to me, I would let you take me upstairs and allow you permission to ravish every single inch of my body and leave marks to symbolize me as yours." Will muttered back so softly that Hannibal's acute sense of hearing picked it up as clear as glass.

"Will, you must behave *amore*. That is a tempting offer but I must refrain due to my family waiting for us."

The profiler understood what he meant and cleared his throat before following Hannibal to the dining room. Standing just opposed to the table was the rest of Hannibal's family.

He'd already known Mischa of course, yet he couldn't help but be struck again by her youth. Her mane of golden sunshine was now light copper, almost bronze tightened in a semi loose bun with bangs and a slight slit parting in the middle with twin ringlets to highlight her stunning face. Her gown glimmered in a lovely shade of jade green. The mermaid- like shape of it was reminiscent of the silent film era.

Behind her left shoulder stood a man dressed similarly in that of his partner but still regal. His suit held equal body structure without making him appear out of place. His face showed a bit of age but managed to keep his skin healthy in giving the illusion of him not growing old. The tone in hair color made him appear handsome next to his wife.

She had the same physical features as the rest of them. Something about her tanned complexion indicated she was from somewhere in Europe. She was divine and attractive. Her ebony silken hiar framed her as a woman of exceptional beauty with thin sharp eyebrows. Delicate bone structure to rival Aphrodite and nicely framed lips in a natural shade of rose.

"Mother, Father," Hannibal's voice broke the short silence. "This is Will Graham."

Thomas's step was measured, careful as he approached him. He raised his hand tentatively and the younger man stepped forward to shake hands with him. Will's confidence surprised

him. He could feel Hannibal's relaxed posture at his side.

His wife smiled and introduced herself, reaching for his hand. Her light touch and warmth was just what he imagined.

"È meraviglioso conoscerla, signorina Lecter." Will said effortlessly in Italian without fail.

She said sincerely, "Mia cara chiamami Simonetta. It is wonderful to meet you Will"

"Grazie. I'm glad to meet you too." And he was. It was like meeting a goddess in the flesh.

The young man beside her extended his hand to greet Will. "Hello, my name is Silas St Clair. I am Mischa's companion." His seductive blue eyes bear a resemblance to Will's and that's where the similarities end. His strongly defined features surely attracted a lot of attention aside from being involved with Hannibal's sister which is far from the only thing that makes him appealing. His attire spoke for himself: A well pressed light periwinkle buttoned shirt with the first three buttons on the collar open. His hair was styled in a manner similar to Hannibal's slicked and framed him well.

The final introductions were even more mesmerizing than he thought. The last gentleman was no doubt related to Hannibal. Given the identical mannerisms they seem to share, Will sensed there was no ill blood between them and showed his respect to the count's brother. Dark chestnut hair with eyes in shades of blue and brown simmering with a hint of authority and mysteriousness. Prominent cheekbones hinted grace with a well groomed mustache. His suit dignified his status as a Lecter. His wife shared the exact same characteristics as Simionetta: Ebony hair, dark eyes filled with a rebellious spirit combined with a sensuality not seen in ages had Will almost caught in a trance. It lasted a mere second before he reeled himself back to reality.

They all sat down quietly. The display for the dinner was something out of this world. Fit for a king and his subjects. More specifically a nobleman reconnecting with a family brought together to re-establish old relationships after years of silence.

With reverence, Hannibal said to his guests, "Before we begin, you must all be warned. Nothing here.. is vegetarian. Bon appetit." before raising his glass saluting a toast.

Atmospheric. Ornate. Beautiful. Secrecy.

Those were the words Will kept seeing as he stood next to Hannibal while the rest of the family sat across from each other. Utensils clinked softly against the near expensive plates everyone was feeding from. The food was exceptionally elegant. Made with the most careful of hands to craft such delicious food worthy of peculiar palates.

"It is rare for someone to ensure my nephew's heart is taken care of. A man of your intelligence gifted with such unique beauty is difficult to encounter these days. I understand your profession is an instructor in teaching trainees at Quantico. Not many individuals would choose to divulge the minds of serial killers and uncover their nature. I salute your talent Mr Graham." spoke Robert with an almost friendly tone towards his nephew's partner. His voice

was dialect. Crisp and clean with every syllable precisely chosen. No one has spoken aloud in that particular way for over two centuries. He was a man of few words. Hardly any at all until this evening. However, no one his nephew had previously been intimately involved with had managed to impress the family. A matriarchal knit unanimously taken with a well below the social ladder chap above all of the wealthy socialites in Baltimore and the world.

“Thank you Mr Lecter. And Will is fine.” The profiler said while keeping his eyes on the well mannered gentleman. His gaze then centered on Hannibal who looked at him like he was the most stunning star in the night sky. Will’s lips turned upward a bit in a tiny smile that proved he nor Abigail were not going to be replaced. In fact they both are dazzling the guests with inside knowledge of everything they’ve learned these past few weeks.

The sounds of light laughter permeated through the room. A sound that has not been heard nor listened to for a long time. Hannibal’s eyes darted to each member of his family. Harmonious. Content to be whole once again after so long apart. It was all because of his gratitude to Will.

It should have come off as too much for Will to absorb the hospitality and kindness more so the dinner he was currently at. He did not expect all of this. They welcomed him. Opening their minds to allow a reclusive shy man into a world brimming with limitless power, unconditional love and a seat among the ranks of a family brewing with oddity, otherworldly attractiveness and a name that ripples off his lips so easily.

As Will’s eyes took notice of everything that surrounded him, a strong callused hand ever so smoothly gilded and linked into his underneath the table. Hannibal’s thumb grazed his knee concealed by dress slacks fitted to suit Will’s form. The teacher sensed a sliver of tension in his body from being touched in a casual manner yet it held intimacy in the way he remained calm and not excusing himself in a disrespectful way which would be far more disastrous and it would be splattered onto the tabloids and spread around like wildfire. He did not come from a noble background nor owned riches. He was from humble origins and had a soul that had not been tampered by someone else.

Lady Murasaki then asked a poignant question to Abigail. “Have you selected a course of studies my dear?”

Abigail, who was dressed in a shoulder sleeved dress with slight gray coloring paired with horizontal rectangular shaped earrings replied with, "Yes and I have wonderful news. I received a scholarship to partake in a program in Women’s Gender Studies at the University of Oxford. I also have been extended an invitation to study a semester abroad in Ireland when my program is complete.”

Everyone was elated with sincerity at hearing Abigail choosing to forge her own path and aiding her career in challenging societal views on gender and sexuality. She earned it by allowing herself to look deeper inside her own subconscious and find the strong fearless woman she always knew she could be.

When dessert was served it truly was something taken out of a professional chef’s kitchen. “This reminds me of when we spent a winter in Piedmont during school holidays.” said Mischa who took a single bite and became transported to a time in her childhood spending

time with her family particularly herself and Hannibal walking through the streets picking up ingredients for a feast and returning to the lodge. Memories they were but treasured ones nonetheless.

“The courtship between the both of you has been the creme de la creme. In our inner circle quite frankly, there was talk about whether or not the rumors were true and it appears they are. Your mother and I have had a length of time to discuss the matter in private, and while there are some who will oppose your relationship because of social status, those who make a mockery of it must be shown that love is simply beyond the morals of a ‘normal’ marriage and pose no harm. What is more important is that you and Will are happy. Therefore we give our blessing.” said Thomas who along with Simonetta saluted a toast in bestowing a tradition given in their family for generations. An acceptance in introducing Will Graham and Abigail Hobbs to a world where they will truly become more of themselves than ever before. A fisherman and a huntress welcomed to a pantheon of gods. Benevolent and merciful in the eyes of humans.

Realizing the turn of the hour, the rest of the family bid their farewells to rest for the evening but promised to reunite.

Abigail and Will helped Hannibal clean up. The energy was familial and minimalism. Eye contact very little due to the time. Retreating to their rooms for slumber, Abigail went to hers while her fathers entered the master bedroom.

It made Will nervous to be in Hannibal’s bedroom understanding he too slept here but under vastly different circumstances. Knowing full well his partner’s history of being able to bed whomever he desires made things more awkward than it had been. It’s not like Will was bad with the physical stuff, he just would lie back and let someone else do the work or sometimes he would be the one to do so. Either way it ends abruptly without a single word spoken or nothing at all.

Will still feels unsure about all of this. It didn’t frightened him before and now it seems like a facade. A false idea. Nestled under the covers, Will’s back faced Hannibal who then turned to his beloved. “Is there something wrong?”

“Do you think your parents liked me?”

“They were enchanted by you and Abigail. Not one person I was with had the intention of introducing oneself to my family. You earned their blessing.” Hannibal whispered.

Palm to palm their hands joined.

The weather was cool. The leaves spring green to shades of orange and red. Fall had officially arrived.

Will was in Jack’s office. His case notes were on the desk being examined by his boss. His knees were jumbling to hobble up and down in nervousness.

“I understand you’re trying Will. What pisses me off is whoever the ‘Tarot Killer’ is someone who has evaded interrogation longer than the Chesapeake Ripper. He has a more extensive knowledge and there are signs he is losing his signature.”

“So what you’re suggesting is we round up every single doctor in the Baltimore area who supposedly has a vendetta?”

“Not that far but I need you to look into the archives at John Hopkins. Employment records to be more definitive.”

Will sighed deeply before saying “Looking for a long needle in a giant haystack or more precisely a medicinal needle to be exact. A judge is going to need evidence to issue a warrant and not to mention the State Medical Board is going to need one as well.”

Jack grimaced at the idea of trying to give probable cause on several cold cases and crossing several lines of tape to obtain the information the Feds need to identify this absolute nutcase.

“I hate to say this but you’re right. I’ll present to them whatever evidence we obtain to see if it is enough to secure it. Thanks for coming and keep me posted.”

“I will,” Will said with clarity and left his boss’s office. He glanced down at his watch. One of the latest gifts from his partner thus far. The craftsmanship was no doubt something to dazzle at. Dyed in shades of steel black with an interchangeable buckle paired with a set of hands in pearl white tinted with silver. The object made Will’s wrist feel complete without limping. In fact it made him feel a bit more structured. *This thing is worth as much as the monthly payment on my house.*

Will did want to give back the watch sensing it was too grand to have. It surely felt like a token of appreciation rather than a gift of love. Someone else with taste would undoubtedly wear it with nauseating pride. He never understood the concept of envy or what it is like to be on the receiving end of someone’s attention until he came face to face with Hannibal.

He was a man who exuded control. Both in his office and in the social circle. His appearance? Immaculate. A wardrobe designed to infiltrate his body with high quality suits from far off places. Organization and time management? Otherworldly. Metaphorical murder, manipulation and matters of the heart? Executed with the utmost care and attention, to the highest standard.

To his limited knowledge of his current choice of partner, Will did know that Hannibal had numerous lovers before him. He was not angry, neither furious, nor bitter about it. If it were anyone else in his shoes, they react in the exact opposite and possibly never return. He was not like that at all. Sure he was anti-social but that did not stop from encouraging himself to be open about wanting to forge a genuine bond. Some would look upon him as an outsider and that suited him.

He always was left in the dust after a date. Will didn’t let it bother him. The idea of love can be taken and broken in a multitude of ways. The context and situation depends on what emotions they are feeling. Will accepts his feelings for Hannibal as his partner slash not

really psychiatrist returned those exact same sentiments. He couldn't tell whether or not he was going crazy.

One thing he did know was whoever is stalking him was either hiding to drive away suspension or perhaps hired someone to act as their stalker. Obsession is a state of being infatuated with an inanimate object or a person. It is the darkest shade of human nature. The victim can become a target for a variety of reasons: Unrequited love, vendetta or for fulfilling one's sinister urges.

No one he or Hannibal knew personally would harbor an infatuation on either of them. It is frustrating to even think about. A not so random stranger fixated on ruining his happiness all because the most eligible bachelor in the state wanted him and only him. No one in their right mind would dare do the things his stalker has done so far: Sending a threat and him in the hospital following a deceitful attack. Their jealousy is escalating. Pretty soon something terrible is going to occur and that will be the final bit that will help Will solve this puzzle.

An arm throng themselves over his shoulder. "Hey lover boy. What's going with you?" Beverly piped herself into her best friend's space. She can sense something was slightly off since the last time she spoke with him.

"If Doctor Hottie dumped you, I would have gone to his office and told him that he made the biggest mistake of his life by cheating on you with a Victoria Secret's model who probably left a reminder of their escapade in his bed. Believe me I slept with a cover model in college and it was the most awkward morning after that I bought lunch at a local diner just to cheer her up."

"He didn't dump or cheat on me. The feeling of being stalked and being in a relationship that's not really an affair with a good looking guy that has all of the world at his fingertips is smitten with a bottom of the barrel introverted low life who just happens to be me."

"That low life is my best friend and is fucking the world's sexiest man. Besides, if the sex is phenomenal, who cares what anyone thinks?"

"We're still getting to know each other and we're not at that time yet but soon. Hopefully not too long to the point I have gray hairs."

Beverly then said, "Let's hope so. And if it does, tell me all the details." She smirked while Will nervously chuckled. His best friend was easy on the eyes and a hit with the ladies in particular. He almost walked in on her once before deciding to leave her to her indulgences. Beverly reveled in the company of women and understood what it meant to be different. "The only time I will be straight is when I finally drink an entire bottle of Dom Pérignon Rosé Vintage to impress Bedelia and show those damn rich people that I *can* handle fancy alcohol at the benefit. Just they wait."

Will agreed to Beverly's oath of consuming a high priced bottle of champagne at a social event where the elite can mingle without a care in the world. This was unusual of her but she carried it with dignity which Will did not have without fumbling into an incoherent mess. That was before.

“I can’t wait to see what type of shenanigans are going to happen at the benefit. Hope you won’t ruin your shoes.” said Will who noticed that Beverly had that expression of ‘seriously?’ and it made Will giggle in amusement letting humor diffuse the events that currently surround them.

“So what kind of event is this supposed to be?” Beverly asked while catching up on her case notes.

“The Kirov Ballet Company is bringing their production of *Romeo and Juliet* here to showcase their talent. Abigail has been looking forward to seeing it.”

“Adapting to being a foster parent with a hot as hell psychiatrist for a boyfriend? Your man’s cult-like followers are gonna go rabid when they find out their god is dating a man who lives alone with eight dogs.“

He ran a hand down his face sighing deeply. “I don’t know if whatever has been going on in the past month is going to continue on. He could have anyone he wanted and he picked me. I do not deserve all this splendor he’s been giving me. He’ll grow unsatisfied. Move onto someone of his pedigree or maybe someone like Franklyn?”

“Okay, first off he’s in love with you and second of all I am trying not to imagine the ‘cheese man’ with your beau. Franklyn is the kind of guy who makes a conversation drop a notch, so people have to pretend to be invested. Plus picturing the two of them together really makes me want to hurl for a long time unless you have a plan.”

“I do not but I can create a diversion at the ballet. Franklyn wants to create this image of me being only with Hannibal just for his money which isn’t true. I’m only with him because we’re two consenting adults who did not violate code of ethics. I fell in love. Is it really a bad thing?”

“When you word it like that, it doesn’t but to others it might. Come on, let's go back to work.”

Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

Apologies for another hiatus. This chapter is a bit short and the story will continue. Drama at the ballet will be in the next chapter. Enjoy

Tower Hill Botanical Gardens

The crunching of leaves beneath paws and feet of men walked among the midday afternoon. Will did not get out much hence his lack of social interaction growing up and it surely did help settle his nerves now.

Winston, Buster and the newest member were excited with wagging tails and noses scenting everything while the rest of the pack were with the rest of Hannibal's family walking several meters behind the couple.

"I didn't expect your family to join us for a walk with the dogs. I'm assuming being a modern day aristocrat has its ups and downs." Will said while noticing the female is keeping a watchful eye on Buster who looked at her with love in his little brown eyes.

Hannibal did not speak. He let his eyes do the talking. "Am I boring you?" Will asked, wondering if his partner had his heart set on someone else.

"I have not lost interest in you *mi amore*. The mere time I spent with you is enough Will."

He felt his cheeks fume even more red. *How does he know exactly what to say? He and Mischa must have been quite the topic of discussion in their school days.*

"Thank you" He quickly muttered to which Hannibal quickly noticed and let his guard down a bit further.

"My pleasure. It appears Buster has garnered admiration for the newest member of your brood." The young gentlemen looked down to see the Jack Russell with his big brown eyes simply staring at the beautiful female like a young puppy. Looks like he wasn't the only one falling in love.

"Have you given a name?" Hannibal asked, meeting Will's eyes, then gazed down at his partner's latest addition to his pack of canines. The dog then looked to Will then Hannibal and back to Will sensing something was coming.

"She has become bonded to the pack as if they were her own family. Protective of myself but mostly Abigail. She displays loyalty to a fault and just the other day I was out exploring the

woods with her and observed a stag grazing. She respectfully caught its attention for a few minutes before continuing its meal. I have never seen a dog behave like this."

The older man carefully dissected the metaphor and symbolism in Will's words. He came up with the answer to his curious tale. "How about Diana? It is derived from the word "divine" and it has roots in Greek, Latin and Indo-European origins that share her name. The goddess is also a defender of the young and of wild beasts. It is said she still inhabits the forest as a moonlit spirit."

The brunette thought of the name and came to a solution regarding whether or not it suited. The animal nudged her head under Will's hand and looked at him with soft round pupils. "Okay Diana, it is then." He gave her light scratches under her chin to which she made a noise of excitement and lightly tugged on her leash for owners to let them know she wanted to resume walking.

The rest of the Lecter family could see how taken Hannibal is with Will. A man beneath the status system. A commoner from the wrong family. Raised by a widow. Sheltered and invisible. He has been proving the non believers so far and frankly with a subtle bite. They were impressed. Very impressed indeed. He charmed all of them with his gift of seeing what others cannot. A gift that can unravel and drive a person to the end of madness. A potentially terrible power if wielded in the wrong hands.

"I like him. He is special. He holds a power so strong even the weakest would not be able to control. Will is someone whose soul was created to align with Hannibal's long before either of us walked the earth. They were meant to be together then and until the end of time." Thomas said wisely while Simonetta laid her head on his shoulder. Their arms linked interlocking until shaped into one form.

"As long as he is happy, we all should be as well." Silas said with a compassionate smile with blue eyes gleaming with content.

Mischa also spoke with happiness in her voice "A man such as Will only comes once in a single lifetime. It is a type of love that transcends all of the philosophies of the world."

"The glittering luminous orb of Heaven neither the flaming blackness of Purgatory can keep them from each other." spoke Robert in a relaxed manner. Lady Murasaki also gave a sign of approval of a tiny smile that showed upon her lips. It was rare to see her nephew by marriage be so bewildered by the immense sheer force of love itself. She hoped this courtship would not lead to a broken heart that would never heal.

A family such as the Lecters were always *that* kind of family. Well mannered. Effortlessly clothed in luxurious attire the rich wished they had. Wealth vast enough to secure the name for generations to come and long after. The secrets of the past were embedded deep in the origin of the family. An ancestor who began a dynasty still thriving after three millennia. Far longer than the Windsors or the Romanovs.

Everyone admired them. Their beauty is timeless. Not a wrinkle or blemish diminished upon their faces. It enhanced their image to near divinity while others scoffed in disgust and jealousy to see everyone else fawning at them like cowards.

They were subjected to rumors about dealing with the devil to obtain everything they desired. Some whispered they were involved in illegal activities while others simply knew they had come from two noble bloodlines. Powerful houses of immense wealth, sealed documents and a charming persuasion to beguile foolish mortals brave enough to sneak a peek.

Marriage was a sacred vow. This precisely was the case with Count Lecter's marriage to his wife Simonetta who inherited a sizable dowry after leaving Milan to live in the southeastern region of Lithuania. Her family agreed to the union after Simonetta nearly threatened to cease contact if they did not accept. It took time for her to learn a completely different language and culture completely unheard of to outsiders.

Thomas was gentle with a heart of gold. He did not flaunt his wealth as many noblemen do. He was one of the rare few who did respect others more towards the working middle class because he nearly lost his life once in an incident that changed his perspective on how to not judge others without understanding the situation firsthand.

Robert endured a similar albeit more dangerous scandal when he too wedded Lady Murasaki at a time when interracial unions between different nationalities was heavily discourged. Much like his brother, he cherished his wife wholeheartedly while she returned those same emotions. Their partnership at first became tender and filled with warmth. The spark between them never waned.

All of their personalities combined molding into a single sentient being. A coven of near perfect specimens too attractive to be human. Despite the passage of time the family still kept themselves afloat to the ever changing world.

After the stroll in the gardens, the rest of the family returned to their accommodations for the remainder of their stay in Baltimore. Meanwhile Hannibal dropped Will off Quantico in front of the main entrance. Several students including Beverly witnessed this seemingly friendly display between two individuals who share more in common than first thought.

The dashing doctor opened the passenger door letting Will out but not before he leaned in to whisper something in Will's ear that made his blood run a little higher than normal. And with that the Bentley quietly left leaving the profiler still flabbergasted at the attention from the numerous set of eyes on him.

It was and still is a lot to get used to being on the arm of Baltimore's most elite bachelor. He had surely developed a target let alone a bullseye on his back.

He walked past Beverly who gently nudged him on the shoulder with a smirk.

Will's classroom

"Obsession is a persistent disturbing preoccupation with an idea or feeling within one's self."

The projector displayed evidence photos of the victims of the Tarot Killer. The candidates were jotting down each single detail of the forensics. Unlike the previous professors the academy hired that were less qualified in criminal psychology, Graham's skills were more convenient and merely realistic in dissecting what makes a serial killer different than their rivals. Plus he was easy on the eyes then but now he has changed to a mature version of himself.

Will's eyes did not lose his students nor did they too change eye contact. In fact they were not able to take their gaze on how well dressed his attire looked on him. A well pressed white buttoned shirt with the sleeves rolled up to the elbows accompanied by a waistcoat and dark slacks. A tie identical in color made him stand out. His eyes perforated back with sternness.

"Aren't envy and obsession floating in the same space?" A man with light blonde hair had his hand moving in one direction then the opposite when asking his question to the professor.

"Envy is a feeling of resentment towards something one wishes they have. Obsession is a desire to have something no matter the consequences even in the most extreme cases." The answer to the question unveiled.

Will then continued to show his students the rest of the crime scene photos and asked what details they could see and he showed them what he could see that they didn't. Eyes inspecting the tiniest of microscopic details and uncovering what truly lies within,

The lecture continues on. Students asked on topic without straying into what was recently going on in Will's life. No one should be subjected to baseless rumors whether they are the intended or not.

Regardless of the emotions hammering within him, Will put on a brave face for the rest of the day. When class was dismissed, he pulled his phone from his pocket and noticed his phone had begun to ring. The incoming call came from Hannibal. He answered it on the second.

"Hello?"

"My darling Will. I trust you're feeling well?"

"Yeah. Never better."

He could feel Hannibal smile at the end of the line. "Since that morning I have been, how do you say a bit on edge?"

"The glorious Hannibal Lecter was worried about me?" Will innocently teased.

The doctor was enjoying what Will was doing to him. "As your partner, it is my duty to ensure you are physically and mentally sane."

"So, um, assuming I don't get kidnapped before tonight. Maybe we can try out for dinner at my place?"

"Well, in your case I favor hospitality over unpleasantness. But I rarely have been known to change my decisions on a whim. I will see you this evening."

And with that the call ended. Will sighed heavily. Glancing down his watch, he looked at the time. He had several hours to spare and brainstorm what to make for dinner.

Sometime later

Finishing up the last few details on the main course, Will quickly tided himself up by dressing in a light gray blazer paired in sync with the same tone in slacks to match. The white dress shirt matched what Hannibal liked on him. He maybe should have changed into something he felt comfortable but opted out due to wanting to make a decent impression on the man he's currently seeing.

The outfit was of his own choosing. It was not something he pictured himself nor would purchase but a part of himself secretly enjoyed feeling dressed up just for Hannibal. He hardly dressed himself in casual or fancy clothing but this time was different. He just made a semi difficult dish that he never made before just to show he was committed to this relationship.

He hoped *he* would enjoy it and see something he created from his heart. Nerves were going a hundred miles when he started and finished this grand feast. Ticking from the pendulum in his brain went by slowly. A pace as quietly as the stream where he'd fishes. Simple and soothing.

It sure as hell could not be real. This relationship that's brewing between them these past few weeks have no doubt been the most amazing experiences he's ever felt. And yet he still feels like he will be left behind as soon Hannibal will be bored of him and move on. He mustn't let those emotions get to him, especially Franklyn's. Hannibal chose *him* and only him.

The sound of tires crunching on gravel and headlights seeping through the curtains of the main living room. Will looked down at his watch and saw that he came perfectly on time. Taking a deep breath, he opened the door and saw the image of beauty on his doorstep.

Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

Drama at the ballet. The book Hannibal reads in bed is "Great Expectations" by Charles Dickens. I took a break to focus on my health this last few days.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will's house

There were no words to describe how Hannibal looked standing in the doorway. Regal and majestic. The size and cut of his tailored suit never failed to amaze those around him including the curly haired brunette standing on the opposite side of the house. "Hello William. May I come in?"

"Of course." He stood to the side allowing his guest to enter his house. He did invite him after all. The door clicked softly behind to make sure no one else followed behind to cause a ruckus.

"You were expecting me?" Hannibal asked as he took in the sophistication that Will made to prepare this dinner for the both of them.

"No one else but you."

The candlesticks were ivory white and they matched the tone of the atmosphere. Gentle and intimate for a night in. Finally a well deserved time to be alone. Within minutes conversation commenced.

The meal itself consisted of a Beef Bourguignon originating from Burgundy hence Will's rush to perfect it a day ahead rather than making a disastrous mess of his own kitchen which thankfully did not happen. He could not stop shaking in nervousness before Hannibal arrived and now settled but still feeling the pressure to be worthy of him. He'd rather dig himself a hole if it were an option to save himself the embarrassment of humiliation and ruining Hannibal's well crafted image in the process.

I hope he likes it. Will thought as he watched Hannibal take the first bite. A few measly seconds passed with silence. A hint of a smile and a slight glint in his maroon colored eyes shone telling Will that he was enjoying, scratch that loving the meal he prepared. The wine itself was a mellow Pinot Noir with the perfect amount of flavor that it did not overpower the warm heartiness of the dish. The expression on Hannibal's face showed a man in love. The kind of love that made someone's heart race with joy of seeing the one they cannot stop thinking about.

Will is trying to be comfortable for his own sake but can't help wondering how he ended up where he is now. Was merely a matter of the heart or was there more to their connection than he originally concocted? He wasn't the type to believe in soulmates. The whole concept of finding the person you're destined to be with seems far-fetched, belonging in the realm of fairy tales and not in reality.

Cooking a meal for a man whose dinner parties were the stuff of legend seemed too high to reach. Now he was wrong. He earned the companionship and affection of Dr. Hannibal Lecter.

"You've outdone yourself. It has been quite a long time since someone I care for cooked for me. Thank you Will."

Will was once again stunned at this deceleration. Seriously, how can anyone Hannibal has been with have not conjured up a decent dinner for him. Let alone a psychiatrist. A *wealthy* attractive psychiatrist. He attracted a few people in his life but never the type who's filthy rich, good-looking and a romantic.

"Y-you're welcome." said Will slightly stuttering. His cheeks flushed under Hannibal's tender gaze

After the consumption, they retreated towards the window overlooking the woods, their subtle height difference made the pair striking with pale moonlight magnifying hollowed blackened shadows across both of their faces almost like skulls. Not the kind people assumed: Decayed, rotting and lifeless. More like carved with a skillful blade. Chiseling, shaping and molding to create something unique and beautiful. A god with a touch bearing destruction, pleasure and death with a flick of his wrist. His companion was equal but more so in unison to whatever his god asked of him.

"Why me? People idolized you, pooling at your feet just to hear you speak. You can have anyone in the world and you chose to be in a courtship with a guy who catches serial murders and lives with eight dogs in the country. Not exactly a pedigree to make the headlines of the *Sun* now would it?"

"Who I choose to see is no one's concern but my own. I picked you because I want to know more about you. Aside from carnal pleasure, I want you and only you."

"What do you mean by that? You're a rich, good-looking man who can have anyone you want. You sent me gifts that are worth so much. You make the most amazing dishes that I ever saw and spent time with me more than anyone. I don't deserve any of this, most of all I don't deserve you Hannibal."

"Nonsense *mon amor*. You deserve all what I have been giving you. The clothes and my company should not drive a wedge in what we have. You are who I have been dreaming of. I desire no else but you." Hannibal said daringly as he turned to face Will who stood still but walked backwards until he felt the slight chill of the closed window pressing into his back.

Will's heart was beating faster than normal. The presence of Hannibal mere inches into his space nor the sultry essence of his cologne clearly did not help the slightly large bulge

between his legs. “I’m not afraid of you. I’m only afraid of losing you to those who would not want to see us together.”

Hearing this made Hannibal’s hand reach out and place itself on Will’s chest. The tips of his fingers feeling the steady strong beats of his heart and the warmth of his skin underneath soft fabric.

“I will follow you to the depths of hell to bring you back. I will protect you with every fiber of my being. Not even Death shall part us nor our undying love.” Hannibal said as he angled his head as if he was going to ask Will for his consent. His wine colored eyes searched pools of ocean blue green to seek permission to place a kiss on the mouth which what Will was anticipating.

The elder man leaned in using his heightened sense to inhale the intoxicating aroma of Will. He slowly moved downwards from the base of his ear leaving slight imprints of his mark arriving at the section between the neck and shoulder. His hands gently gripped his waist as if he were a precious blank canvas begging to be painted and be given life.

Will at first remained frozen, not sure whether he should reciprocate the movements on Hannibal. His mouth opened a bit to let out a gasp so small that somehow his lover picked up on it. The doctor carefully slithered back to meet Will’s gaze and saw eyes hooded and dilated with desire. He could not explain how he was feeling so he hoovered his lips over his beloved’s decadent mouth. Without hesitation Will hungrily pressed his lips to the doctor’s like a man drinking water after wandering a blaze scorching desert. He was thirsty to taste a drop more.

“Mine,” Hannibal whispers.

“Yours,” Will breathes as he feels his other hand ushered forward allowing leverage to curl his arms around Hannibal’s neck and sense every cut and line of his body against him. A strong knee pushed slightly between his legs making the empath breathe a low moan. The flush to his cheeks deepend expanding towards the collarbone. He was absolutely breathtaking in exposing himself to the man giving him everything he desired. A curious angel sampling a bite of the delectable carnal pleasures that awaited him should he give himself body and soul to the devil.

He soon felt a rush as the sensation of Hannibal’s fang-like incisors sunk into his neck in a bite too gentle to come from an elusive creature so powerful whose complex proved near impractical. The pheromones in his body reacted quietly as the tall man retreated his mouth from his neck to face the men who locked him in tightly with his ravished, nearly debauched appearance.

Pale cheeks bloomed like a pure red rose. Lips slightly redden from biting to make a sound worthy of sweet satisfaction. In the dimming light, his eyes were darker, blue sapphires plucked from the deepest parts of the sea. Will was the embodiment of perfection and beauty for someone of his age to still obtain after his adolescent years had come and passed.

“What do I taste like to you?” Will asked Hannibal in a voice that sounded as if he had just experienced the best orgasm of his life. Clearly getting marked by his gorgeous boyfriend

should not feel good. Not this good to make the profiler practically near kneel to beg and demand he be taken right there. That certainly was not a bad idea to think of. The devilish doctor ever so seductively wiped his bottom lip with his thumb while never losing his sight on Will who blushed even more, almost fainting at how Hannibal was looking at him.

“Your taste is of a rich savory wine combined with fresh rain soaked pine needles. A rare combination indeed catered to my palet.” He said fluently without stumbling on his words.

His voice. Dream-like, velvet lusciousness to whisper against skin. All of his intimate fantasies were only beginning to take effect. He belongs in this sanctuary of consciousness filled with only himself and the fallen nephilim who has shown him just a fraction of what his world had to offer. All Will simply needed to do was to pull back the veil and take one step forward.

Hannibal Lecter was handsome. Educated in medicine. His knowledge surpassed the basics of human anatomy. He dressed himself in well fitted tailored three piece suits. His noble background surely would garner attention from suitors of similar pedigree, even common-folk. This courtship is *real* , truer, more passionate and personal than any of the short lived acquaintances he’d known. Will Graham had him under his thumb so deeply.

“Looks like you have to decide whether or not you’re gonna eat me.” Will’s eyes looked downward, sneaking glances upwards to see what the response or movement of his body could be indicating.

“Not yet but one day. For now, I appreciate the company of one whom I’ve surrendered my heart to. You alone are dedicated to me as I am to you William.”

Will wanted him to stay the night in his home. Nothing scandalous of the sort would happen to crumble his image ruining his good name forever unless there was evidence to prove otherwise. “You should probably head home to rest. I’m sure you would not be late to your appointments and have patients wondering where Dr Lecter spent his prior evening.”

“I’m afraid you’re right, *querido* . Good night.” And with that Hannibal bid Will goodnight with a kiss of timeless passion to seep through his bones and make him remember it the day after.

Will couldn’t stop the smile on his face. The emotions in the kiss they’d shared in his living room had warmed his soul with fire. It seems so strange to date someone like Hannibal in this age but he wouldn't trade it for anything else. His eyes twinkled like the stars in the sky. He can’t imagine it would become better than he dreamed. He sure as hell is excited to uncover it.

Hannibal’s home

He was in love. His heart ceased to flutter on the drive back home. Neither the smile adorning his face. Once under the covers of his bed, he picked up a book from the night table. It was a gift from his beloved. It was something he never expected to read though his partner has

good taste even if he did not know it yet. Stopping after absorbing half of the story, he placed it back where he kept it, turned off the lamp and settled in for the evening.

John Hopkins Medical Center

Beverly and Will stood in front of the door to the Medical Director's office. The double warrants to obtain personal documents and employment files was not an easy task to simply just waltz in and ask the State Medical Board without landing in the slammer for illegally stealing private information which was the last thing the FBI wanted without slandering nor jeopardizing the ongoing investigation.

"Are you and Hannibal okay? I didn't mean to pry, I just noticed the case is taking a toll on you more than it does on him. This job isn't easy and it makes *Silent Hill* more dark fantasy than hell-ish horror." Beverly kept her eyes on the door, hands in her jacket while conversing with her friend who kept a tight grasp on the warrants. His fingers gripped and nearly crinkled the paper.

Will looked up to face her saying "Yeah, we're okay. I'm glad that you're here and thank you."

"No problem. How much longer do you think this moron is going to take?" All of a sudden, the door opened and a slightly older woman greeted them. "Hello. Please come in." She led Katz and Graham into her office. Both agents sat across from her desk.

She was very beautiful. Elegant in her posture. Eyes as blue as the sky on a clear day, her features were feminine with a sharp jawline. Her hair was trimmed, styled to resemble Lady Diana and it accentuated her beauty. "I assume you are with the Federal Bureau?" Her slight accent proved she was European. France to be exact.

"Yes, Dr?"

"Dubois."

Will cleared his throat before saying, "We're investigating a series of homicides. According to a lead based on forensic evidence, the suspect is an expert in the human mind. He inhumanly psychologically tortured his victims for their sins, mutilated them post mortem for shock value before presenting them as a display to outmatch the Chesapeake Ripper. "

"The suspect we're seeking has a connection to John Hopkins. Always wanting to stand out. Is it possible they were a resident?"

Dubois' eyes began as a little confused at first but started to carefully place the pieces one by one until forming a clear image. "There was one. Won't be a moment long." She left her desk dashing somewhere to retrieve something.

By the time she returned, less than a fraction of a second had passed. The doctor placed two horizontal rows of files. Backgrounds of former employees and current medical residents.

They got straight to work scanning through each person trying to find any clue to see if there was a motive.

“I got something.” Beverly nudged Will’s shoulder with her elbow. She tapped the title of a newspaper article.

“What is it?”

“Listen to this: Resident forced to withdraw from program, suffered physiological breakdown after losing prestigious scholarship due to forged miscalculated exam results.”

“Did it say who won the scholarship after the scandal?”

“Hannibal Lecter was awarded by solving the problems on the colleague’s USMLE exam beating the previous high score becoming the second winner to achieve such a prize.”

“That certainly would drive someone over the edge. Did the student have a name?”

“Uhh..just a last name. Sutcliffe. Only relative is an older brother Marcus. He works here as a neurologist.”

“Let’s go talk to him. Thank you for your time Dr. Dubois. We’ll be in touch.” And with that, the duo left the Director’s office to talk with another possible link.

Marcus Sutcliffe’s office

“It seems to me that the Sutcliffe you are looking for is my half brother.”

“You don’t seem surprised. Has he been this competitive as a child?”

“He was just like any other. When he and I were enrolled in medical school, the urge to be the best was a lot then as it is now. He went for days cramming, his knowledge proved it until the day of the exam. As you both know Dr Hannibal Lecter arrived before then. He amazed everyone including the staff with his vast extensive knowledge that was not known at the time. I admired him myself, actually we all did.”

“What about you brother? Did he harbor envy towards him?”

“Yes, he despised him. Mom and Dad could buy his tuition at John Hopkins but they couldn’t buy Hannibal’s brain.”

“So he was jealous of him?”

“Pathologically, He kept begging Hannibal to flunk the exam just once so that he could be the one to earn the scholarship. He refused and he passed while my brother sulked in the shadows. He didn’t show up for the rest of the term so the schools he chose had to drop him due to an incident in the dorms.”

“Was there ever an investigation?”

“No. He enrolled somewhere else and was able to work here in Baltimore. The last time I spoke with him, he seemed fine but I still can’t help but feel that he may do something to correct or earn what was ‘wrongly’ taken from him. Please contact me if you find him.”

“We will.” Quietly leaving the office, they rode the elevator, passing the nurse’s station and leaving the hospital altogether. A folder of document copies nestled in the glove compartment of Beverly’s Nissan.

“This case is giving me the creeps. A romantic rival turned crazy stalker for you and a classic rivalry that hasn’t ended for your psychiatrist boyfriend. Looks like we are all seeing our share of the wackos but this takes it to a whole new level. Will, are you even listening?”

He turned to look at her with a ‘I’m listening’ expression. “Yeah, sorry just zoned out for a second.”

“So, what’s new? How is it going with Mr Dreamboat?”

“Great. Better than great. It’s off the chart.”

She happily scoffs “So, how do you really feel?”

“Since this whole courting started, things have been weird. Like someone’s trying to play with my head. For instance my car got trashed. Then, my mom got this creepy package in the mail.”

“What kind was it?”

Will winced at the memory of it. “It was a note with the words all in caps saying “Your son is a whoring slut” along with a pair of my boxers. What’s even more creepy is that whoever did it knows what brand I use.”

“Okay, that just put me into almost vomiting my lunch.” Beverly fake gagged at this revelation.

“Why go through all of the trouble just to label me a homewrecker even if I’m not and besides Hannibal is not married so what gives?”

“They’re just jealous of the attention you’ve been getting from Hannibal. Not to mention the nice clothes and the fancy dinners he’s been taking you to. Besides *you* are currently dating a very attractive man with money Musk wished he had. I imagine the sex is out of this world?”

“What is it with you dying to unearth my sex life? You’re dating a hot psychiatrist too, you can’t deny that.” Will smirked.

“Little bisexual gremlin. Your relationship with Hannibal Lecter is pretty much the talk of the city. Everyone wants a piece of him. Not just his money, just solely to see if he’s good in bed which I bet is like being fucked by a Greek God. Not too long for you Graham and when you do please give me all the details and I mean *all* the details.”

“My best friend who’s also a sapphic is limiting details on her sex life which I’m guessing is pretty great since we were roommates in college. I still remember the nosies your date made when you practically fucked her brains in our dorm room closet on Homecoming weekend. You were a hot shot and still are.”

“For your information, I was tipsy and needed somebody I could celebrate with when the football team won so I took it and let’s say I earned the touchdown.”

“It just feels so unreal to me. I am the unluckiest guy on the planet then all of a sudden some rich sexy man just swoops in and snatches up my heart like some European Prince Charming.”

“Your life is *Pretty Woman* minus the ‘lady of the night’ bit. Beauty and brains rolled into a shy dog loving cinnamon roll.” Will rolled his eyes as Beverly kept asking questions on the dates he’d been on so far and what tips he can give her to wow her special someone.

By the time they returned to the Bureau, mainly Will’s classroom he got a text from his mom saying

Mom: It seems so long ago you were just a baby and now you’re grown up. I have never been more proud of you sweetie. Here’s a photo of you when you had what I like to call ‘ too beautiful to be a boy/too pretty to be a girl phase. (Attached photo)

Will: Mom..I did remember that time. Anyone I came across would size me up and stare at me like a rack of lamb. Thanks for the flashback. I love you.

Mom: I love you too.

Will’s house / MccLuster Hall

Adjusting the bow tie on his tux and taking one final glance in his bathroom mirror Will looked like a completely different person. His curls were tamed but still held their shape. His light stubble grew just a bit more the last time which gave him a mixture of friendly and mysterious, not as mysterious as Hannibal. He can pull off that look without question and everyone would faint.

His blue-green eyes turned cerulean in the low bright light of the small space. A deep breath and inhale hammered his heart down a bit though he can’t imagine what surprise his boyfriend had in store for him.

The Bentley sauved itself with a smooth entrance. Except it wasn’t Hannibal who was driving but his bodyguard. “Cassian.” he said with a welcome as he slid into the passenger seat.

“Mr Graham”

The drive was silent. There was zero need to communicate, letting their eyes do all the talking. This current ballet season was supposed to draw in respected critics from the high

end art circles, not to mention a company from the far reaches of Europe who traveled quite a long journey to be praised. The dress code in events such as these was always the top of the top.

By the time the valet opened the door, Will nearly tripped, almost catching the attention of photographers who were taking snapshots of the esteemed guest list. *Get a hold of yourself you idiot. You nearly landed face first on the cement and almost ended up on the front page of the Sun for crying out loud.*

Cassian was standing a few paces behind keeping a lookout for potential intruders. The strict security came in handy. Not that Will didn't need a bodyguard, he was perfectly capable of defending himself, however given the shoulder injury he sustained and the blow to the head ending in a stay in the E.R, it probably became the only solution as of this evening.

The concert hall was grand. The prestige art culture of Baltimore had its fair share partnering but to host an event as elegant as an opening to appeal audiences of showcasing Eastern Europe. They are doing a good job going all out to make sure it made the headlines.

Will noticed Cassian heading towards a group of guards that were dressed in identical suits hence the earbuds. He gave a non verbal nod before walking over to the bar. He observed the space: Women dressed in their finest gowns, men donned tuxedos of every style. He did feel out of place. He should have stayed instead at home yet it would shatter Hannibal to know he left without a simple explanation. No more running to shield his embarrassment. *I'm ready.*

He recognized two figures. Their silhouettes were similar in stature. One was tall and refined. The other was an inch shorter but no less tall. He walked closer until they spoke knowing whom they were.

Will gently hoovered his hand on Hannibal's lower back. Abigail gave a small smile happily that he made it in time. The young woman wore a red vintage ball gown adorned with an encrusted belt along with a clutch purse. The silhouette gave a distinct classic 40's look. Her auburn locks was styled swept into one side in radiant curved loose waves. Hannibal looked flawless as he always did: Severe, beautiful and timeless. Too perfect to be good and too perfect to be human.

"You two chit chat. I need a drink." Abigail left her fathers to their own devices to mingle leaving Will and Hannibal to survey the scenery.

"She certainly seems to be enjoying herself. Being raised by a hunter, now living with two equally masterful mentors. It sure will get TattleCrime on their toes just to unmask what simmers underneath." said Will as his grip on his champagne flute tightened a bit as he felt Hannibal's wrist graciously coil resting on his hip bone. The fingers warmed the flesh hidden under the crips white fabric. "We do have a higher level of intimacy than the common Doctor Patient relationship. Almost as though we have a daughter together."

"Going to a ballet with said Doctor who clearly has a knack for the theatrics is romantically pining after a hermit-like fisherman living with eight dogs. Nothing more scandalous than that."

“Darling, you gave your consent for this relationship to blossom as did I. We have committed no treason. Is falling in love a sin?” He whispered as he set both champagne flutes down on the counter top. The psychiatrist then placed his hand on Will’s cheek asking non verbally if he would kiss him. Will nuzzled into the touch kissing the inside of his palm granting said wish.

It began light at first. Testing boundaries to make sure Will was all right with displaying public affection with him at a black tie event. When he did not reject, Hannibal kept going with more intent but kept it appropriate enough to not scare off anyone with his slightly brazen presentation. Will curled one hand in his lapels while the other traveled upward into his silken ashen blond hair reeling him in to soak in the luscious exotic aroma of Dr Lecter.

Carefully retreating, the two lovebirds precisely Will cleared his throat to tell his date that they should follow the crowd. Being the perfect refined gentleman bachelor he was, Hannibal offered his arm as a sign of courtesy to his beloved. Not wanting to be rude, Will took up on the offer allowing him to be guided into the crowd.

A bell rang signaling the guests to enter the auditorium meaning the show was about to commence.

The tuning of the orchestra never failed to amuse the illustrious psychiatrist. The sound was melodic and bittersweet given what the tale was about. The dancers gave it their all. Every pirouette, plie, jump, twist and turn captured on their faces during each act. It catered to his taste.

Will felt the music call to him. He knew the story all too well. Star crossed lovers begin an affair changing the feud between families. In the end taking their own lives was the only way out without wanting to part from the one they love. It cemented itself in people’s minds as the blueprint of forbidden romance. His romance was prohibited in some eyes but to him it was more than just lust. It is real. Real than the mythical fable of Tristan and Isolde or the doomed tragedy of Héloïse and Abelard.

The teacher then placed his head on Hannibal’s shoulder. It fitted perfectly nuzzling a bit into his neck like he was crafted to be his equal. His hand meanwhile rested atop his lover’s thigh. Gentle and a bit possessive to not share the man with anyone other than himself. He hardly displayed a jealous streak when it came to dating or meta one night stands but for this event he let it slide

Hannibal’s wine colored irises glanced at the beautiful godling then at their hands linked together. They matched so well, it seemed almost too synced to be one life form. When the last note hit and the curtain fell, Hannibal rose from his seat applauding enthusiastically.

Pretty soon everyone else joined in praising a wonderful performance even Will and Abigail gave thanks and mimicked him. “Shall we?” The attractive man then held out his hand to Will as a sign to guide back into the main hall of the building but it was simply a courtly excuse to hold his hand again this time in a public social gathering of all places. The trio are surrounded by members of Baltimore’s cultural elite, mainly Hannibal metaphorically holding the ball in court.

Mrs. Komeda, an attractive woman in her fifties along with her husband were a well respected pair in the community though not as revered as Dr Hannibal Lecter. She recently noticed that he had brought someone along or in this case another two new people whom she had never met.

The companions Hannibal arrived with were beautiful. The man next to him was the definition of an angel; Pale ivory skin. Hair like curls of fine chocolate, Cupid's bow lips and eyes as deep and as blue as the waves of the Aegean. The young lady was also quite dazzling. Her dress was the tone of a deep red like the shade of an apple. Her aura allured those around her.

She along with several of the guests walked over to where her husband stood. Greeting the well mannered doctor and his entourage was no less delightful. In fact, it was better than any other time Eleanor had been invited to an outing such as this.

"It's been too long since you've probably cooked for us, Hannibal."

"Come over and I will cook for you." The sophisticated doctor said casually focused on Mrs Komeda.

She affectionately teases him back, "I said properly. Means dinner and the show. Have you seen him cook? It's an entire performance. He used to throw such exquisite dinner parties. You heard me. Used to."

Hannibal teases her with grandiosity and a warm smile, "I will again. Once inspiration strikes. I cannot force a feast. A feast must present itself."

"It's a dinner party, not a unicorn."

"But the feast is life. You put food in your belly and you live." The Cultural Elite are no less charmed. Eleanor notices Will's eyes staring at Hannibal like a young buck in love.

"I believe this young man is trying to get your attention."

Hannibal turns again, smiles warmly at Will before making his introduction. "Eleanor, this is my partner Will Graham and our daughter Abigail."

Mr Komeda shook Will's hand in greeting while his wife gave the young woman air kisses as a token of causal manners.

"Hannibal, you old dog! You had never told us you had a child. She is a beauty."

"I acquired the necessary documents for the court to foster Abigail for one year with the possibility to permanently adopt her." The Elite were taken with emotion at hearing the doctor's tale of taking on a fatherly role to care for a young woman on the path to womanhood.

"What is it that you do Mr Graham?" Mr Komeda asked while sipping his champagne.

"I teach criminal psychology at Quantico. A professor is what you are suggesting."

“Bravo. It’s a wonder that you managed to enthrall Hannibal. Not everyone was successful in keeping themselves on his arm for long but you my dear boy are the champion.”

“Who’s hungry?” The entire group chuckled in amusement not knowing that someone was watching from afar.

It’s risky to show up here unannounced but someone deserves to know the truth. Franklyn thought as he saw the object of his affection be all lovey dovey with his enemy. It irritated him since he met the doctor prior to Will Graham entering the picture, snatching him up before he could have a chance to further their so-called relationship. He made some significant progress in therapy yet it was never enough. No matter what he wore, what store he wandered or what friendships he gained, it did not catch his attention at all. It felt like Dr Lecter did not harbor attraction nor favor with him. It just did not make sense to him. Will Graham was the issue.

He was the cause of all his current problems. Everything Franklyn did made Will surpass him. Whether it be a change of clothes or a recommendation of a certain food or anything art related, Graham outranked all impressing the most desirable man on the planet to engage in a high profile amorous affair. He was gaining everything: attention, clothes, trips to luxurious destinations and adored by the person he wanted to share it with.

What’s so special about him? He was not a sociable person. Lives with dogs alone in his house away from the glitz and is an only child of a widower who had to raise him on her own. He was not made to walk while conversing with stunning people. He suited a waiter no less to know his place was at the bottom and not at the top. How dare Will steal his spot? Batting his eyes like some disgruntled side piece? Why did Hannibal center his affection on this loser and not a good mannered cultured man like him?

His ‘best friend’ Tobias appeared looking dapper in his tux. It made him approachable. His date however was something else. The gown was a stunning metallic gold with an eyebrow raising neckline that cut down all the way to her midsection. It was accessorized by a heavenly emerald necklace with a matching ring. She was a vision of eccentric beauty. Her sun kissed skin glowed like the sun. Her hair black as a raven’s wings trimmed to highlight a strong angular jawline with a slight dimple on her chin. Eyes were pools of dark chocolate that shone like quartz of obsidian.

“Franklyn, what are you doing here?” Tobias asked. His eyes displayed surprise and shock to see him step foot in a high secure venue without security noticing.

“Taking in the sights. Can’t a gentleman look his best when coming to a ballet?” Hearing that sentence made Budge side eyeing him with an expression of not amused.

“If you’re here to make another attempt at making Dr Lecter notice you, it’s overdue. Leave him be. He’s happy. Don’t ruin that for him.”

The man scoffed in disagreement, “I’ve been losing to Will for three years, watching an unattractive nobody get away with anything and everything, and I’m over it. Tell me you

don’t feel the same way.”

“I did but I had a change of heart. I’m no longer associating myself with you.”

“Fine.” Franklyn then pulled out a USB drive from his jacket pocket. “What do you think the Medical Director will say when she sees the good Hannibal Lecter engaging in a histoire d'amour secrète with his patient? Scandalous isn’t it?”

“Have you gone mad? Are you blackmailing Dr Lecter?!” Tobais’s date raised her voice a bit, keeping it down enough for the two men to hear her plea. “You musnt’ if you seek to salvage what is left of your reputation.”

“Emina, it’s all right. I can handle this. You shouldn’t worry.” He looked at her with reassurance in controlling the situation without it escalating into a full blown spectecale. He turned to see his so-called friend vanish under his nose. He regained sight of him walking eventually to where Dr Dubois was held in a conversation with Hannibal along with several of her colleges.

“Excuse me, Dr. Dubois. I have something you need to see.”

The woman clearly was no doubt confused by this man interrupting a very important discussion. “I’m sorry, do I know you?”

Franklyn denied introducing himself, “That is not important. I have proof that Dr. Lecter is having an affair with his patient Will Graham.”

The director sighed in distaste at this stranger bombarding her with alleged accusations. “Mousier, I am here with friends. This is the one night of the year where I try to put everything else out of my mind and enjoy myself.”

‘Mademoiselle, I’m not lying. Here. Look as close as you want.” He retrieved the drive and was just about to hand it over when someone accidentally bumped into him causing the object to fall into a glass of champagne destroying the evidence to prove his claims.

“Oops. I apologize. It’s a little crowded.” Abigail made a surprise entrance in the nick of time that had everyone feel relief due to her ability to appear out of nowhere.

“Mousier, the reality is with no proof, I can't tell who is telling the truth. I do not like tattletales much more than I like individuals who use their sensuality to further their careers. So, if you all please excuse me, I am going to try my best to enjoy the festivities which hopefully are more graceful than this. Good evening.” said Dr Dubois as she turned with a quick turn ignoring Franklyn’s efforts to change the conversation.

“There was proof, until this young lady drowned it. Why won’t you believe me?” Franklyn huffed in seeing yet again another planned move turn disastrous. His face turned scarlet at being humiliated and so he quickly dashed out On the other hand, Tobias quietly said to Emina, “Will you excuse me? I’ll be right back.” She nodded and he rushed after Franklyn.

“You took photos of them?! What the hell were you thinking?” Tobias yelled as Franklyn waited for the valet to return his car.

“He should’ve never gotten romantically involved with Will Graham in the first place. I tried to warn him.”

“Oh yeah, you really had his back. I always knew one day your obsession with Dr. Lecter would go too far, but I never imagined you would do something like this.”

“It’s not that simple. I never meant to hurt him. I just wanted him to see there were other options.” He tapped his foot against the pavement in bitterness.

“In this case, the only person you’re hurting is yourself because starting now you are completely cut off from my life. Stay away before you do something you’ll regret for the rest of your life.” Tobias said before reentering the gala.

When he entered his car, he stepped on the gas pedal leaving tire marks on the pavement as he drove off angering other drivers who honked at him telling him to watch where he drove. Switching in and out between lanes on the highway proved even worse as he kept fighting back tears nearly spilling from his eyes. He breathed in holding them in for a bit longer.

Franklyn's apartment

The door to his apartment slammed like a bullet shattering glass. It startled neighbors but none of them got up to see what the source of the commotion. Objects tossed on the ground from pent up frustration.

Once he reached his quarters, the light flicked on to reveal an eerie similar replica of his bedroom but elevated to match Hannibal’s personal style. From the cool navy blue comforter, to the expensive bed sheets to the theremin sitting by his closet filled with semi designer clothing.

On the bedside table was a framed photograph of Hannibal. The base was monochrome, the glass protection made from a high quality manufacturer. The photo itself was from an interview the man did when he first began gaining notoriety from his practice. His youthfulness still intact then as a lad giving him to age at a slower rate maintaining a divinity that of God himself.

He never allowed anyone to get close to him. Until Will managed to worm his way in to rob his eyes onto him controlling his emotions so that no else can try to pursue him. He will find a way to break this so-called ‘bond’ Will effortlessly cast upon the man he cared about even if he had to cross over the line. If there is power, he will dismantle it and earn his trophy.

Will was forcing Hannibal to sacrifice everything while he did nothing. What kind of person does that? He did not understand him the way Franklyn did and he was going to show it.

Holding it in his hands gave a serenity in his own way. There were so many things they could be together if *he* only listened. He was scorned and he doesn’t like it when it does not go his

way.

Chapter End Notes

Dr Dubois is modeled after French actress Lea Seydoux who appeared in Mission Impossible, Blue is the Warmest Color and James Bond.

Emina is modeled after Algerian actress, dancer and model Sofia Boutella who starred in The Mummy, Atomic Blonde & Star Trek Beyond.

Chapter 12

Chapter Notes

Apologizes for another hiatus. Enjoy

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Mccluster Hall

Franklyn surely made a display showing up here tonight. Will thought as the chattering continued on. He did not consume anymore champagne as he did not want to cause interruptions and ruin another night out much less for Hannibal's sake and more for his sanity.

He kept up the facade for a bit longer until he whispered in his partner's ear that they should head home to rest for the night. Bidding farewell, both men and Abigail managed to pick up the Bentley from the valet with no hiccups. The chill from the November air was no match for the warm heat coming from the A/C vent. Drops of slight rain moistened the windows with a clear view from the outside. Dark gray clouds dancing across mountains, swarms of half formed mist joined in latching on like a newborn to its mother.

From the passenger seat behind Will, Abigail could see his left hand reach for Hannibal's right hand across the gearshift. She saw just how much they care for the other from one simple touch. No need to verbally communicate with sentences or phrases when it came to her fathers. Glances and signal cues were a system in this little family that had been created not by blood relations but by sharing a darkness that hithered within all of them.

Since she arrived into their lives, she had always wondered what myth suited them. Hannibal lived in a worldly court filled with darkness intermingled with beauty so haunting it almost felt like Death had come knocking to lead a soul into a labyrinth where apparitions wandered before judgment.

Will embodied life itself. Spring and Summer he spent with his four legged companions, wandering the endless woods and its meadows and fished in the river. Fall and Winter were him huddled in his house on the sea or together with Hannibal and their daughter in their night realm.

She in her perspective embodied nightmare and madness when falsely provoked. Plucked from one nest to another filled with something she had wanted since her mother's demise. A family. Now it is slowly coming to course. The lessons so far have been beneficiary, educational and inviting to witness her own becoming into a family who holds so much in the palm of their hands

The intruder was no doubt disrespectful towards Will. She knew of the man's intolerable attachment to Hannibal. It made her feel uncomfortable to know there were some individuals who can be aggressive when not claimed to be. Surely, any other person would not tolerate this kind of behavior in this day and age but some will incline to disagree regardless whether right or wrong. She is struggling to let her parents know about Franklyn or wait for something unbearable to occur to any of them. She would never forgive herself if it did.

She will tell them. Just need the right moment to share it. Which is now.

Hannibal's house

Hanging their coats, the trio silently walked into the kitchen. The dim fluorescent lights made the space more brighter than if it were a morgue. The doctor poured three glasses of water to ease the taste of champagne. The pendulum swings back and forth between all three of them.

"There is something I need to tell the both of you. It's something about that Franklyn guy." Abigail pulls out a pile of cream colored envelopes, uniting them all before placing them on the counter top.

Will puts on his glasses then reads what it said on the note. "These are love letters Hannibal wrote to me. I thought I lost them. Where did you find these?"

"I did a little detective work and found them enclosed in a secure box in our dear cheese man's bedroom. Believe me, that is not the only thing I have found." Retrieving her school bag she carefully maneuvered the objects she found in front of her fathers's gazes.

"You broke into Franklyn's house? How did you get his keys?"

"I know someone who's a locksmith. Institut de Médecine Sainte Marie. Does it mean anything to you?" Abigail asked Hannibal as he looked at the file more so the picture of him.

"It was the medical school I attended in Paris. My drawings attracted the attention of visiting doctors from America which in turn granted me an internship to continue my studies at John Hopkins when I settled in Baltimore. The building is no longer. Someone from my time enrolled must have given Franklyn a copy of my credentials along with my records archived in Dr Dubois' office."

"He's been stalking you since then. I thought it was just a silly crush he had on you but I never thought he would follow you through half of your life. Observing and watching." Will's eyes pondered over his boyfriend's personal history. His photo taken in his youth was slightly faded from being sealed and hidden away. He always knew Hannibal to be good-looking with his age yet he never saw how even more beautiful he was as a young man in his early twenties navigating and studying cadavers in Europe. God, he sure waited a long time to find him.

"Talk about your fan from hell." Abigail shudders uncomfortably at the mere idea of someone detached from reality stalking her foster father and wanting to eliminate anyone standing a chance with him including Will, especially him. She became exhausted at this

point of seeing a former patient hell bent on destroying her second parental figure when has done nothing. No dark vendetta or ill harm from either man.

“It is best to conceal these letters in a more secure location to ensure something like this does not happen again.” Hannibal says as he looks over the letters he sent to Will. These were mementos of revealing his most vulnerable personal thoughts onto paper. His affection and love were written in sentences from his very own heart. Raw, human and entirely filled with emotion.

Someone had the nerve to barge into Will’s home without invitation and steal one of his most prized possessions and store them far away so that he wouldn’t notice them.

“Thank you Abigail for finding them. I appreciate it. No more snooping around until the all clear. Do you understand?” Will said in his stern father voice.

“Yes, dads. What do you want to do with all of this?” She pointed to the belongings she uncovered during her little investigation.

Hannibal quietly cleared his throat answering his daughter’s question. “I will call my lawyer in the morning and let him know what we have uncovered so far. For now, it is important we all rest.”

The young woman gave each of the men a tender hug before heading into the guest bedroom leaving the doctor and the profiler alone in the kitchen with the clues their foster daughter had collected as evidence.

Hannibal drove Will home, parking the car coherently, exiting the vehicle and walking up the steps to the front door. Silence except for the emptiness that stretched on for miles and miles to the nearest home. He always assumed he was going to be alone aside from being admired for his looks when he was merely a boy of sixteen. His bewildering beauty made him almost like Galeta. Ivory skin that glowed pink when flushed, hair grown to resemble a young fair lady except he was male and that certainly did not stop women nor men from flaunting their eyes to him. His mother noticed the attention became a bit much for her boy to handle so she decided to act as chaperone until he ventured out on his own to explore his own path.

It was not that he was not attractive. He is. He just did not seem confident enough to feel beautiful in someone else’s eyes, much less blurry drunken one night stands in college and a bit later in life. Of course, being able to feel empathy in almost any capacity sure did drive in scaring off potential romantic matches when learning about his struggle in socializing. That hit the nail in the coffin for a while when he first settled down in Wolf Trap. Quiet and peaceful. No nosy neighbors to bang on his door in the middle of the night to voice concerns.

Taking in stray dogs proved to be therapeutic as a man in his shoes might be. His pack of four legged buddies never complain except when it’s feeding time. They just enjoy being in his company offering to lend a paw and cuddle with him to bring comfort to his own existence. He does not know where he’d be without them. His dogs gave him validity and humanity

Abigail represented *storge* or love between parent and child. He never imagined he would look after another human being perfectly capable of not needing anyone but she was wrong.

She needed structure. A parental figure to guide her and not restrict her from gaining knowledge from the world around her.

Hannibal represented *eros* or the love that ignited passion and physical desire. An all consuming urge to consume each other figuratively and physically in all senses of the word. When he first met him five years ago, Will was teaching trainees for the first time and got called into Crawford's office. He was not interested in him at all in the beginning. Their eyes stared into the other frozen in place. Flashes and blurs of falling snow and smoke and a faint cry echoed in Will's ears as he met the honey colored orbs that were once maroon changed color under the dimmed bleak light of the office-like setting.

The psychiatrist introduced himself in a professional manner. The profiler just stood there bluntly asking whose profile was the doctor analyzing in almost an annoyed arrogant voice leaving Jack and Hannibal in the office while he left to give a lecture. Watching him behind the glass gave Hannibal a feeling he never thought he would feel again. He did not know what it was he was feeling seeing such a unique daring beautiful mind behind those dazzling hues of sapphire blue. He simply had to get to know him. Strike up an acquaintance or friendship of some kind.

It was harder than it looked to garner Will's attention for a minute. He almost gave up on trying until out of the blue, the young man gave into the personality of his friend wooing him. Soon, they began to spend an accurate amount of time working together on cases that would terrify even the most experienced officer or investigator. It was not long before Will discovered his friend's bone shattering secret.

He found Hannibal covered in blood. Hair styled now in disarray, his suit wrinkled from a scuffle with the assailant whose mouth was torn to a slit resembling a grin of some kind and face bludgeoned beyond recognition. His once glorious image now showed a predator gaining dominance over its prey as the light faded from the deceased man's eyes as he laid motionless in the snow. Will refused to talk to him since that night resulting in two years of silence.

No communication. Nothing from the psychiatrist. No explanation to why he killed that man in the woods. By some god–forsaken miracle, the doctor reached out to the profiler out of the blue. The former cop tried to resist talking to him on the phone or in person. It once pained him to still remember that cold winter night he saw what he wished would never see. A bleak bad dream.

He finally agreed to meet him face to face after a muted period that made him question whether or not this friendship of theirs could piece and repair itself back together like a shattered teacup.

This time however, Will opened his mind in allowing Hannibal permission to tell his side.

By the time he fully explained the severity of that night, a single tear slipped from his eye. The doctor saw it and wiped it away, comforting him. Will closed his eyes at feeling his soft touch on his skin. It seemed like the older man had made amends to let someone he knew aside from his family get close to him in terms of secrecy. In all his years, he never felt anything as what he feels for this man. Comfort, happiness and love. It slowly has become

more than a simple admiration. A need to worship his form in caresses that lit his skin with curling tender flames. To lay a crown upon his head as a sign of equal status and balance in their courtship.

“Is something troubling you? Was it what Franklyn said at the ballet earlier that has caused you such doubt?” Hannibal asked in a voice that he hardly ever used. A tone of genuine concern for the man who has stolen his heart in every possible way imaginable.

“Will, answer me. Please.”

“I’m damaged goods. You fell in love with what I can do. What I can see that others can’t. Can you honestly say you don’t feel different about me? Look at me! Can you love this?!” He pointed to himself. Tears welled up in those beautiful jeweled eyes now slightly turning red.

“Yes. Your ability is incredible. But that is not the reason I’ve fallen in love with you. I’ve fallen in love with you because you are brave, generous and different than anyone I have known. I do not care if you are not wealthy. What matters is you complete me and I complete you. We are bound to each other. A connection such as ours is unbreakable. It is fate. We are destined.” He walks up to Will and embraces him. The profiler clutches fistfuls of Hannibal’s coat while quietly sobbing. The doctor cradled his head as he was made out of delicate fragile painstaking glass.

When Will pulled himself back to look into Hannibal’s eyes, he was much closer in orbit. In fact, he felt the tip of the doctor’s nose against his own. He nuzzled, pressing his body as close as he could, inhaling the natural muskiness of him that emanated from him. He was an aphrodisiac. One drop of him and the strong secretive psychiatrist became addicted. His hunger magnified at the very sight of him. It excited him to know he soon has yet to mark his lamb as his mate.

“What spell have you put on me?” He searched his face. Will’s body softened into his, as if it were meant to be there. The teacher’s back arched, wanting to feel his hands on more than just fabric. He wanted Hannibal to take him inside, remove his clothes and praise him and make love to him until the sun rises above the clouds. He needed him now more than ever and yet it would deem improper to satiate his physical desire in public without Will rejecting and not wanting to see him again. He did not want his precious mongoose to go another day without fulfilling his hunger as well.

“I have not put a spell. You brought me into your world as I’ve brought you into mine. Like you said, we are bonded. Our souls had been separated in time and now are reunited as one. I am offering myself to you. I want everything so show me everything my love.” Will whispered.

With that declaration alone, Hannibal placed a light lingering kiss upon the halo-like bed of chocolate curls. The shorter man breathed in the contact of lips on his skin. It felt heaven.

“In my dreams I always dreamed you were flesh and blood. I thought I’d go mad to know that someone out there in the world was my soulmate from another lifetime. Do you believe in reincarnation? The idea that humans can be reborn into another body? Or finding said

other half after centuries of wondering where they are in the world. I'm not the kind of man who believes in that kind of stuff but now maybe I should start believing in it."

"I have waited a long time for you. I also have dreamt of you and I will lay my life to ensure we remain together until the end of our days, until our last breath leaves our bodies and our ashes are buried side by side. Even if the universe collapses, we still will find each other. I promise." Hannibal whispered as he kept his hold on Will not wanting to let this perfect soul vanish.

He does have a way with words. He knows which to choose and how it will affect the prey.

"I finally found you interesting. I appreciate your company. It honestly makes me feel like I'm the only one who can see past your so-called 'person suit'. I see a man who longs for someone to love him. The light and dark sides of a soul who has seen so much. A heart that has built walls that someone clever enough was able to climb over it. I guess that person is me."

"I will grant you whatever you wish. It is in your favor. I belong to you as you belong to me." The leather glove on Will's cheek sent the hairs on his skin up as a reaction that he enjoyed being in Hannibal's arms more so his touch on his body. He was like a purring feline that adored pets particularly from the man he's slowly falling in love with. He wanted to say those three words. Eight letters that could catapult their courtship to newer, grander heights. But nothing spilled out.

So he said the only thing he could think of that was even close to what he originally intended. "I'd like to spend a night with you." His cheeks flush from the chill of fall as he said this.

The doctor knew what his partner was implying. He was not the kind of man to be taken advantage of unless someone crossed him in a disrespectful way. "You do not need to if you do not wish to spend the night with me. When a physical line is crossed in a relationship, it means both individuals trust the other. Whenever you are ready to do so, until I hear those words, I shall be waiting but for now, it is best to go in whichever pace you wish. There is no rush."

"Okay. Get home safely."

"Good night Will." He bowed slightly as a sign of courtesy before entering his vehicle and driving away silently leaving the profiler muted on his porch. Entering his home, the pack greeted with soft whines and licks to his face, thankful that their master arrived home. He undressed his tux, hanging in the garment bag in his closet and settled in bed with a plain shirt and boxers. The dogs were gathered at the base of the bed in protection mode sleeping soundly.

FBI Headquarters

A Volvo station wagon parked its place among other vehicles in the lot. Mr Graham arrived earlier than usual. The sun shone a bit before light gray clouds shield its rays to give the

aesthetic of the crisp cool undertones of leaves falling from bare trees in a tri -colored palette.

His wardrobe for today consisted of a dark plaid checkered button-up combined with a cinnamon toned cashmere sweater with a dark navy blazer to finish it off. His work bag held less objects for today's lecture. There have been no recent bodies dropped so far which is puzzling given that the team uncovered five and God knows how many more might be out there.

Entering the building with his ID secured was a time saver given that he tends to lose things. Walking into the hall, he was greeted by his students and Beverly who gave a low whistle at his clothing choice for today. "When do you become all fashion forward Mr Introvert? Or do I sense somebody had a good time at the ballet last night?"

"Let's save the conversation for later eh Katz? Good morning everyone, I hope you had a stable weekend. Let's begin shall we?"

No more than several hours had passed since he arrived. The students handed in their papers for the term to Professor Graham who placed the papers into a folder and stowed it away in his work bag. When the last of his students left the room, Katz re-entered with a crystal vase of the most beautifully arranged flowers ever put together and cautiously placed it on his desk.

"Delivery truck dropped it off so here it is. Man, your boyfriend has good taste." She gazed over at the enchanting display of craftsmanship to select such elegant colors for someone like her best friend.

Will hardly couldn't believe his eyes. He never received a gift such as this before in his whole life. It sure was worth a lot considering who paid for its arrangement and delivery. He lowered his nose just a bit to inhale the scent of each flower. His glasses had a few drops of water due to how fresh this bouquet turned out to be. The flowers themselves were even more astonishing. A single ivory rose, two stems of baby's breath, one stem of sweet William and finally a single burgundy rose. There was a card tied with a crimson ribbon at the base. The profiler flipped it open with a single finger absorbing the calligraphy and wording.

Will

Thank you for the beautiful evening. All my adoration goes to you.

Hannibal

He felt his pulse go haywire at the memory of last night. Bodies pressed together in proximity the way lovers of old did in time's past. Clearing his throat, he passed the card to Katz who formed a heart with her hands while reading the message. "You two are perfect for each other."

Will still can't ignore the feeling of jealousy and envy from either side of the line. He understood why strangers were giving him the stare down. A man from the low class fraternizing himself with a wealthy rich nobleman of European descent and hailed from a line

of aristocrats who were fewer in number. The patronage system surrounding the Lecters were filled with admirers from all over the world: Professors, painters, mathematicians, archaeologists and astrologists.

Katz then looked up at Will. “What happened at the ballet?”

The man stammered for a bit until his face returned to normal. “Franklyn once again caused another disturbance. He had a flash drive and was going to show it to Dr Dubois, almost revealing our relationship and nearly sabotaging Hannibal’s career. Thankfully, Abigail swooped in time and let the ‘cheese man’ humiliate himself even further. I also heard that Tobias severed ties with him which is probably another reason he won’t be able to get close to us anytime soon.”

“Anything else that I should know?”

“Well, he dropped me off back home and asked if something was bothering me. I told him that I was “damaged goods”. I asked him if he felt differently about me. Like I was some kind of omen that kept holding him back. He said he loves me just the way I am. Flaws and all.”

“Do you want to be with him?” Beverly asked.

“Yes.”

“Well, then go after him.”

He groaned. “Bev, it’s a recipe for disaster. He’s gonna get bored of me. I just know it.”

“Will, do something for once in your life. Do you want to spend the rest of your life alone? Or do you want to be wooed by your mystical god of love?” She posed herself like a dramatic theater major overly using Shakespeare. He lightly swats her arm in retaliation.

“Moving on from relationship hurdles, there is one thing I want to ask. Please don’t take this the wrong way.”

“Sure. Spill.”

The man looked around with his eyes to make sure no one hears what he is going to say. He ducks down a bit in a semi hushed tone. “How do you know from your experience? The uh..the right time.” Will’s cheeks turned red awaiting Beverly’s disagreement on the subject matter.

She looks at him with a smile asking, “Oh my God! Are you talking about having sex?!” She blurted just a bit too loudly, making Will hush her down.

“Can we not discuss my sex life to the entire department please?”

“Will, is this your first time with a man? Your first time ever since Molly?” That name brought up a few memories from years ago. He met a nice girl during freshman year of college. She was cute and seemed like the type of woman he’d go out with. They dated for

about three years, almost planning to elope until Molly decided to end it. No infidelity from either person. Neither were they angry at the break up. They had some good times while it lasted. And now here he was experiencing it all over, only this time it was a very different kind of relationship.

“Okay, so you and Hannibal want to? I mean, have you talked to your mom about this?”

“She knows about us. Although not about the physical intimacy part. Looks like I’m gonna have to get tutored in sex ed. God I feel like a forty year old virgin.”

“That’s because you have only gotten plain vanilla sex and less than stellar blowjobs. What you need is a man who can make you orgasm and see the stars which by luck you got one. Major question, is Hannibal a good kisser?”

Will shot her a look of mere shock. She put her hands up in an honest way. “I’m just asking.”

“He is. Although I am even more nervous about whether or not we’re gonna get distracted by a body dropping out of nowhere before his dick sticks the landing if you know what I mean.”

“I know exactly what you mean. Hell, I’m surprised we’re both queer and getting the best sex ever by two attractive people. My best friend is about to get deflowered by his rich sugar daddy boyfriend.”

“This conversation is on pause. My virginity will not be discussed until after it happens. Right now, I’m headed out for lunch. Wanna join me?” Will titled his head towards the door and Beverly laughed and jogged up to him bumping shoulders.

They both picked out a spot that was casual and cozy enough to be away from eavesdropping. On the topic of the case, Katz disclosed there were no recent victims in the last forty eight hours which means the ‘Tarot Master’ is biding and building his technique to scare the public into silence.

When their lunch ended, Katz made Will promise to message her if anything goes south. He told her that he could handle it. She stirred him up by reciting the very words she said to Will when he saw Hannibal for the very first time. They said their goodbyes for now.

Will’s house

The sounds of barking and wagging tails greeted Will with eight balls of fluff. He happily laughed taking in the soft warm fur of his pack. He huddled them all inside with the bouquet in his arms to avoid the oncoming rain.

His mom was in the kitchen emailing a client from overseas. She did not look up from the screen as he walked past her heading for the fridge. “Hey honey.”

“Hi. I’m gonna make myself a sandwich. Do you want one?”

“No, thanks. You have to admit Dr Lecter is attractive for his age.”

“I’m sure if you are attracted to that category of men, then…” Will said as he chopped a few slices of tomato.

“The rich well mannered psychiatrist type of man?” You’re the one who made him feel like he’s a school boy having his first crush.” She said lightly, teasing him.

He stopped assembling the meal as he placed both hands on the counter, closing his eyes and sighed deeply. “Do you think Hannibal and I are meant for each other? It’s almost like I’ve known him my whole life or practically several lifetimes. I still think it’s insane.”

Delilah closed the laptop softly sliding the second chair of the dining room out so that he could sit next to her. He walked over, sat down and placed his head on her shoulder like he always did when he was a child. “Can I give you some advice?” She spoke in a tone that was comforting and motherly.

“Sure.”

“You need to figure out if you feel forever about him before you take this any further. A relationship like this will define your life.”

“I don’t know if we’re there yet Mom. I don’t know if we’ll ever be”

“One more thing.”

“Okay.”

“I just need to make sure you need to wear protection when having anal intercourse. And if you’re bottoming then you need to be on Truvada and get the HPV vaccine, do you remember the brochures I gave you?”

“Yes, I remember. I have been going to get tested, I am fine and thank you for asking about that.”

“When you’re a parent, everyday is uncharted territory. And when you want your child to be happy then you embrace it.” She placed a loving sweet kiss on her son’s head before hugging him with all the love she had.

“I love you.”

“I love you too.”

Abigail’s room

Textbooks were spread across the comfortable bedspread designed in a cool shade of beige gray. The lamp on the bed table was a light cream giving the space a soft neutral glow.

A soft melodic sound from the faberge carousel egg caused Abigail to look upon it with a tiny smile. Hannibal had gifted it to her as a birthday present alongside a female cat with a sleek dark gray speckled coat mixed with brindle shades. The young woman blessed her the

name Asteria. The feline accepted her new name wholeheartedly, settling in as well as respecting her owner's adopted father who resembled a god in her view.

Asteria was nestled among the duvet, tail swishing back and forth and being touched by her master as she studied, focusing on her notes, not paying attention to the gentle knock on the door. It was Hannibal. He was dressed in his sleepwear mostly notably a night robe the color of the chasms of the universe. "Ready for bed?"

Abigail rubbed her eyes trying to not fall asleep and wake up with textbooks on her face in the morning. "Yes. I just finished up an important chapter and it appears Hypnos has already decided on the time."

The doctor's lips turned into a genuine smile in seeing his protege grow accustomed to her new life. Away from a terrifying monster into the den of another but with a conscious and not bent on inflicting horror just for the twisted rush.

"Good night Abigail."

"Good night Dad."

She felt protected in this domain and she was thankful for that.

Franklyn's apartment

A full bottle of white wine sat untouched in the kitchen next to an inexpensive wine glass. It was a difficult challenge to find a superb brand of cheese to pair with this wine that he chose for the evening. A rendition of Bach played on the speaker. It was fine, though not as good as Hannibal's taste in music.

He was supposed to resume therapy with his new psychiatrist but decided at the last minute to duck out because they were not *him*. They did not have his tone of style nor a voice similar to him nor have a background of aristocracy in the modern age. He was a man of stature and status. Desired for his charisma, devilishly gorgeous genetic makeup and above all else the rumors surrounding his notoriously out of this world skills in the boudoir. Dr Lecter was in the society pages always in the arms of a woman or man but mostly with women. Still, he managed to swoon the social circles with his voice. A voice that he wished he could hear again.

The day that he was transferred to him was a day he will always remember. *He waited outside the door. The doctor has a very lucrative practice. A socialite revered in such high regards. When it opened, he saw an enigmatic figure. The perfect male specimen. High cheekbones, supple bone structure, the tall lean suit sculpted to his form and eyes that promised wild adventures.*

Mr Graham was a dog. Scruff around the edges. A poor background hemming from Louisiana spending his days moving from one spot to the next with his widowed mother. He recently hired a PI with money he had left over to dig into his enemy's personal life. Photos of him when he was a youth certainly had Franklyn double check the photos to make sure he

had the right man and it turns out he did. It astounded him to uncover dear old Willy boy was a looker but he wasn't in his point of view. Hannibal could do better. Someone with class and etiquette. Not a sweaty fisherman whose people skills were suited to a servant rather than a gentleman.

Why can't Hannibal see past the professional relationship? What was so intriguing and special about Will that the man would break conduct, seek his hand and engage in a transaction clearly based on lust? It was unjust, so unearned. So horrid. It made him sneer in absolute disgust in seeing this commoner, this impostor steer Dr Lecter away from him. This mouse is loved and given attention from the one person who can give it all to him. His plan needed another scandal. He searched what his PI had discovered until he found something that made him smirk. This will certainly throw a wrench in Graham's way and make Hannibal see this con artist for who he truly is.

Franklyn always wanted to be adored and loved. He did not despise his middle class upbringing, he just wanted to reach out and grab the riches that were far more luxuriously suited to him. Until that fateful day when an unattractive stranger unknown to him waltz in and create some kind of hypnosis on the psychiatrist opening the door to his world to this bluegrass lowlife rather than a well educated man like him. Will Graham did not deserve the life he had been given. So what better way than to destroy his reputation and take it?

Chapter End Notes

Asteria is the Titan goddess of falling stars and astrology. She is the mother of Hecate who is the goddess of witchcraft.

Hynpos is the Greco-Roman god/personification of sleep. In most myths, he was the son of Nyx and the twin brother of Thanatos (Death).

Chapter 13

Chapter Notes

Content warning: some explicit sexual content in the beginning of the chapter.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal's office

The doctor closes the door behind him with a soft click at seeing another patient finish a session with him. Looking at his watch and the appointment book, he made note of not including Franklyn due to what transpired since he transferred him to a different doctor which he hoped would be the last to treat him. Though there were inconsistencies from rumors that the man refused due to his so called 'standards' which Hannibal found preposterous.

A gentle knock broke the psychiatrist's mind of thought. Opening it, he found Will on the other side. "Will, I wasn't expecting to see you this early."

"Is this a bad time?"

"Of course not. Please come in." He stood to the side allowing his beloved to enter the office. Will took off his overcoat placing it on the chaise lounge behind him. He sat down leaving enough space for the man to sit beside him and so he did. The young man noticed a blazer removed revealing a black vest paired with a salmon ensemble. He looked nice.

"What's on your mind?"

"You. I move, you move. Like magnets. I'm different when I'm with you. I don't have to hide who I am."

"You're waking up to who you are. Who you've always been. A god at my side."

"Hades and Persephone. A clever metaphor. I always thought you were the serpent and I was Eve." Will inched him a bit closer so their shoulders could touch. A tiny spark flowed with a gentle hum.

"I have compared your cunningness and beauty with Lilith. Her willingness to obtain self freedom led to her refusal to be subservient to Adam thus she was cast out of Paradise. Although most modern scholars view her as an early symbol of feminism challenging the structure of gender, power, autonomy and the enduring allure of the forbidden."

"The forbidden? Like men or women engaging in intimate acts with either gender even though said act is somewhat frowned upon?"

“It is deemed immoral in some countries although much of the world has recognized it. The act of intimacy itself requires more than meaningless sexual gratification. In fact it can be rather pleasurable if with the right partner.”

“Can you teach me how to please you?” Will replied in a husked voice. The shyness of him pleading made his blood run warm with arousal. Ripe and ready for him to devour.

Hannibal answers the question in the only way he knows how. By showing how much he loves Will by kissing him. Softly at first not wanting to spook him by over demanding he be submissive.

The younger man felt his body move without him realizing it. He slowly pushed himself onto his back, the headrest cushioned the contact making it easier for him in allowing Hannibal to be in between his legs. Impulsively, he reached out and grabbed his silk tie, pulling him so that their faces were mere inches apart. “I want you,” he breathed. Their bodies aligned perfectly.

Breaking the kiss, Hannibal let his teeth graze Will’s earlobe lightly insinuating a low moan coming from his throat from the man beneath him. The profiler groaned, lifting his hips just a little to feel some kind of friction. Hearing the sound his lamb made had the psychiatrist be a bit more bolder in his demonstration. Will with whatever emotion he was sensing unbuttoned his shirt halfway down exposing the upper half of his body. Here was the lamb emerging behind the facade.

His passion, ignited by Hannibal’s love poured into his actions. The doctor caressed his hips sensing the inferno he harbored. His perseverance and dominance in voicing his desires delighted him. He chuckled softly leaning into Will’s ear whispering, “Do you want me to show how much I’ve wanted you?”

Will’s response was a mewl whimper in hearing the man express his want so openly. Hannibal’s fingers traced his collarbone, grazing a nipple feeling it harden before pausing at the belt buckle of Will’s pants. “Please Hannibal. Touch me.” He did not need another word to compromise his attraction to this man. He will have him prepped and pampered for consummation of their courtship.

With effortless diminutive hands, the doctor unzipped the seam before with the hands of a sculptor inserted his hand inside Will’s boxers pressing his palm against the erection he obviously tried to hide. Will tilted his head nipping at Hannibal’s bottom lip with a gasp of being touched in the most intimate of places. It began innocently. His fingers gripped his cock with a lover’s grace. The twisting of his wrist and motion of his hand had made Will very needy.

His hands, which had normally rested on either his shoulders or in his hair, explored his chest and his back, feeling his muscles through his clothes, pressing him tightly against him. Beads of sweat began to moisten his skin with a light sheen implying he was close to reaching climax. When he did, the sensation was so euphoric, it made his head lolled back in bliss. The tinted flush of his ivory skin combined with the milky white of his orgasm caused Dr Lecter’s pupils to dilate seeing how he brought his lover satisfaction with an expert hand.

Retrieving his pocket square, he helped Will clean up after their extracurricular activity. When they were both done, the profiler brought his lips to his ear, “Make me yours. Tonight.”

“Are you sure?”

“With all my heart.”

He brushed his thumb against his now swollen lower lip. “Only if you’re ready.”

“I’ve wanted you forever, Hannibal. Please don’t make me wait any longer.”

The older gentleman’s mouth curled into a closed smile. “Come to my place. I shall make you a feast worthy of your gift. I can assure you how the rest of the evening will go.”

Will’s mind wandered with smoldering incense of what could happen later. “What you did, how do you know how to give pleasure? Did someone teach you?”

“What occurred was just a taste of what is to come. You indeed asked me if you could please me, did you not?”

“Yes. Can I?”

“You will soon enough. For now, let us enjoy our hour together.” And with that sentence alone, Will sat across from his lover slash technically boyfriend while he spoke of his day. The leather chairs were sitting closer than normal. Apparently, he liked it like that when he was alone with him.

Nearly thirty minutes later, the profiler was fidgeting yet in control of his emotions coursing through him. Hannibal on the other hand was carefully jotting down notes with ease. His hand held the pen as if it were light as a feather carefully writing with his penmanship that screamed high class.

“Keeping tabs on me Dr Lecter?” Will asked. His brow arched wondering whether or not he was observing his behavior or writing down his opinion on what he truly thought of him. A patient, a friend or a lover.

“Only for you.” Hannibal said while closing the book and placing the pen on top as a sign of completion. His legs were crossed one on the other. The dark slacks molded onto his skin without a wrinkle in sight. It seemed as if nothing can imperfect him. Admirers were no less fortunate to gaze and awe at Dr Lecter with a heady combination of lust and envy. It was not like he had been born in a family that harbors extraordinary sleuth and genetic makeup that caters to only the rarest of bloodlines. He has and while it did have its positives, it also had its negatives. Mostly centering around just how much fortune he has and if he lives up to his name.

“It seems you have a favorite out of all of the others. I think it’s fair to say it’s me. Although I for one have not exactly been known to be a favorite of someone.”

“It appears I have been accused of favoritism among patients. I wonder whose attention I have garnered.” Hannibal said in that rich smooth baritone voice. Each word sounded so

perfect without coming off as distasteful. *He probably had prestigious tutors in primary school.* The tip of his shoe sensually grazed the ankle of Will's pants as a distraction while not losing his concentration.

"How do you know precisely what to say? To make me feel as though I'm some kind of pure maiden who meets a ravenous creature intent on changing said heroine into an eternal companion."

"It is in my nature to enjoy company with the one I choose to spend it with. You're different Will and that is why I am allowed to shower you with whatever you want. There are no limitations."

"For you there are no restrictions. For me it's different. I can't help wondering why I've never known myself as much as I do when I'm with you. It's as if I had known you way beyond this life. Perhaps we knew each other in another life, maybe several centuries?"

"What you are describing is an imago. It is the image of a loved one, buried in the unconscious, carried with us all our lives."

"Soulmate seems more like it. Finding one another across various lifetimes wanting to be together yet cannot. To love someone so much then lose them so suddenly, I can imagine it would be tormenting."

"A love that transcends the very essence of time to the point of madness can be a nightmare in and of itself than without it." Hannibal hunched forward a bit to grasp Will's hand into his own pressing tender kisses onto his skin as a way of tethering. An anchor. A paddle to balance him.

The professor's eyes showed care for this man. A man who had the ability to accept his fate and not hide from God but relished in his own power to spread misfortune and death to those he found simply rude. Not the typical off hand comment but the kind that does not tolerate forgiveness or mercy from fools.

"Words have no power to impress the mind without the exquisite horror of their reality. Science has not yet taught us if madness is or not the sublimity of the intelligence." said Will.

"There is no exquisite beauty..without some strangeness in the proportion." Hannibal said, making another metaphor about the loneliness of Death and the fragile nature of love itself.

He certainly is enjoying seeing Dr Lecter kneeling before him. Praising and worshiping.

"Seeing you submitting is a first for me, Doctor. I wonder what else I can do to see you in this position?"

"I am looking forward to doing what you ask of me. You and I are one forever mylimasis." Hannibal looking into Will's eyes with such adoration it almost seemed like a fantasy.

The other man felt a surge of dominance in seeing his lover willing, consenting to engage in his first time physically with him. He usually was in a few instances the one being used for

quick emotionless escapades. Now, it was the other way around; he can be allowed to give pleasure and be pleased in return and unlock the gates to set free his inner desires be granted.

“I think I’ll eat your heart.”

“Please do.”

At the end of the session, Will gave Hannibal a very sensual reminder in the form of a kiss that surely would cause eyes to shield from the scene being witnessed by no one. He prefers to have his personal life concealed rather than being bombarded by reporters following him. The reminder itself was a glimpse of what is to happen. “See you tonight?” he asked, still in Hannibal’s orbit not wanting to leave knowing he needed to resume working on grading term papers.

The doctor couldn’t help brush his nose against Will’s tenderly. He hardly gave affection towards anyone he previously courted. Then the most beautiful creature to grace the earth walked into that dreary office changing him. Peachy ivory skin paired stunningly with a bed of chocolate halo-like curls and eyes that morph from the brightest blue to the greenest shade of hazel. Will was his angel.

“Yes.” He said, still looking at him as if he were a fine art piece. The profiler finally left, leaving Hannibal a bit flustered, clearing his throat before closing the door behind him and sitting at his desk. Pulling out his phone from the drawer, he quietly began conversing with Mischa.

Hannibal: Will and I have decided to fully embrace our courtship. In the physical sense

Mischa: I’m assuming this is where you want me to take Abigail to spend a night with the family. Do not worry, we all are very discreet when it comes to your relationship with Will. I can imagine she will have a splendid evening. You have all our word that we will keep an eye on her through the night.

Hannibal: Thank you Mischa

Mischa: You are welcome

Sagamore Pendry Hotel

The rest of the Lecters were casually lounging in the living area when they heard a soft knock. Mischa placed down her book, peaked through the peephole to see Abigail with her feline companion and an overnight bag on her shoulder. Suffice to say they were all happy to see her.

The women were eternally grateful that another female subsequently joined the family. It may have been a week since meeting Abigail but Simonetta, Murasaki and Mischa thanked fate for bringing her and Will into making their family whole. Silas, Thomas and Robert also welcomed her with open arms. Taking in a young woman and older gentlemen into a wealthy family surely would raise eyebrows given both Abigail and Will were from a middle class

background and commoners they were but it didn't bother them in the slightest in fact it made their ambitions all the more valid.

All of them settled down to discuss whatever subject came to mind.

Franklyn's apartment

He sat in his leather bound chair with a cup of whiskey in his hand while the other scrolled on the latest news of the *Sun* . The fiasco he created was no doubt an embarrassment to his already tarnished reputation. His mother no less ridiculed him for making a night of celebration for high society into a disaster for those involved, specifically Dr Lecter.

Glancing at his phone, he pulled up his contacts seeing Tobias's name. He tapped it and heard the dial rung. It kept ringing and ringing until the automated voice said,"The number you're trying to reach is no longer available." Franklyn scoffed and slammed the device into the wall with a loud crack. *Bastard! He blocked me?! What kind of friend is he? Does he think he's better than me?!*

He tried to think back on his relationship with Dr Lecter and the relationship he had with Graham trying to understand what the difference between him and Will were. He himself was cultured while Will is not. He enjoyed the attention which Will hated. Lastly, he laid claim to Hannibal a long time ago. He could feel it slipping away. The right to show *him* how much he sacrificed and changed to meet his standards. It worked before, it must work again. It needs to.

Bursting into his bedroom, he knelt down to grab the lock box noticing it had been tampered with. The lid was open and the contents inside were gone. Someone must've forged a key and broken into his place stealing the letters Dr Lecter wrote to Will. Whoever took them will pay severely.

Will's house

Placing the last of his student's papers on the stack, Will sighed with relief knowing he graded and completed his last task of the day. He just hoped he wasn't too boned out for tonight.

His phone vibrated with a message. Picking it up, he saw it was Mischa of all people.

Mischa: Your alibi is arranged. Your mother is staying at your house with the pack while Abigail is with the family. You and my brother have the house all to yourselves tonight.

Will: You sure are happy that I'm going all the way with your brother. Not that he needs to although I am kind of scared. Not scared, frightened that I will be a lousy lay in the sack.

Mischa: You will not be. Believe me, I had never seen Hannibal this enamored with anyone since our school days. You changed him Will. You brought him back to life and you brought light into our family again. We all consider you and Abigail as members of our family now.

Will: I just feel like I'm not enough to be a member. What would your brother think if he knew just how much I'm afraid of closeness, let alone intimacy? The friendship we had was fine. This image of him on a pedestal and me at the bottom capitulate what I truly think I am to him.

Mischa: Do not let your fears nor judgment of Franklyn decide how you feel about my brother. He cares about you, treasures you above all else. What do you have to lose? I want you to be happy with him. We all do. Hannibal almost went mad when contact ceased during those two years. You are his anchor. He wants you. I will be ecstatic when he finally says those three words to you.

Will: Wow. You sure know how to get under people's skin with Shakespeare talk.

Mischa: I do have an affinity for the dramatics. Your romance with my brother is real and from the outside it appears you as well have come to love him.

Will: I hate to say it but he is different than I thought most rich people would be. He has a heart somewhere buried underneath that suit of his.

Mischa: It comes with the package of being a Lecter. You captured his heart. Love it with all you have. See you tomorrow. Have fun.

Will: See ya.

Later that night

With an overnight bag packed and spare clothes stuffed inside, Will was ready to go. He bid his mom and pack goodbye for the night before backing out of the driveway and onto the road.

He felt his hands quaking on the steering wheel. Blood rising, breathing heavily in imaging arriving at Hannibal's doorstep and not going back until morning. *God, he's so addicted. He's addicting. He radiates stealth and sensuality he himself could wish obtained. He can't wait to be the one he makes love to. Feel himself inside his body, his very essence inside of him. His soul mating with his.*

He needs to calm down. It is going to happen. Once it does, he will never get enough. It's been a long time since someone gave him what he always wanted. Someone to love. A person who would not give up and travel to the ends of the earth to defend him. He would do the same. His mind kept reiterating the myth of Achilles and Patroclus: A bond forged in brotherhood. A war fated to end all wars. A hero's refusal to fight for a corrupt ruler. A connection so powerful it made the heavens fearful of Achilles's impending wrath. A death so mournful it made a shrieking wailing cry echo be heard across the ages shaking the earth to its core. The tale itself made him tear up a bit. The sadness Patroclus felt knowing he'd be denied a burial until his golden haired god too was slain in the mortal realm and searched for his other half in the underworld. Away from all the ploys threatening to force them apart for eternity. Reunited in the other world always and forever.

Their story gave rise to his and Hannibal’s story. He swore he will not let it end in tragedy again. He’s going to change it and give it the ending it so rightfully deserves.

He loved how his body reacted to Hannibal. He sensed that it somehow happened before. Somewhere in one of their past incarnations. It felt right and safe. Will was created for him as Hannibal was created for Will. Their destinies were created in the cosmos from eons ago. He couldn't deny the feelings he had for Hannibal sustain him any longer. Within minutes, the man arrived on the doorstep of the mansion and knocked. His fate will unfold and his flame shall ignite.

Chapter End Notes

The establishment that the Lecter family stays at is a real five star hotel in Baltimore

Chapter 14

Chapter Notes

> Happy bleated New Year. Apologizes for another month long hiatus. Explicit sexual content in this chapter. Skip ahead if not wish to read. Enjoy.

Hannibal's house

Opening the door, Will was greeted by an image of Hannibal he'd hardly even seen. He was still dressed although the blazer was no longer with a chef's apron. *He was probably in the middle of cooking when I knocked.*

Pushing all thoughts out the window, he was guided towards the dining room where a formal dinner awaited him. A bottle of Sauvignon Blanc rested on the wooden surface along with two plates of Cacio e pepe. *He sure does love to show off. His charm is what makes him loved.*

"You sure know how to make someone feel special. I guess that's why everyone likes to be around you."

"Admiration can be a person's undoing. While it is a wondrous emotion, it can often lead to a need for self validation."

"Like someone needing love because they can't face the reality that they alone are the root cause. That can raise questions on whether or not said person was emotionally neglected or wanted something that they know can destroy them."

"The Maenads were filled with jealousy upon hearing Orpheus's vow to never love again. In a fevorus induced rage, the poet was stoned to death and his body desecrated. The god Bacchaus turned them into trees for their role in Orphesus's demise. Mania can be dangerous."

"It can be. That's what makes love enthralling and deadly." Will said. " It can morph to create something harmonious or create something dark and monstrous. It burns and crushes."

"Indeed" Hannibal muttered as he lightly sipped the wine. The flavor was clean, subtle and slightly sweet which suited this dinner. The mood was ambient, peaceful and quiet.

After they'd finished their main courses and were sitting quietly gazing into one another's eyes, Hannibal excused himself to retrieve the desert he prepared earlier in the day. He returned with a single small crystal plate with two forks and placed it on the table with the demeanor of a good host. The desert itself was not an ordinary chocolate cake but a Torta Caprese. A flourless concoction that had an almost macron like outer shell. The texture itself

was airy, soft and melted in Will's mouth so smoothly that he wished it would never end. He felt that being hand fed was a strange albeit odd kink for someone to have yet it felt nice to be wanted by someone.

He mirrored the same technique to Hannibal who gladly accepted. The way his lips were around the utensil was genuinely sensual. Will did feel a rush go to his loin. His knees were pressed together and the heat grew until the fork fell making a clattering sound. *Way to go Graham*.

"I'm sorry. You can be a distraction sometimes. N-not that there's anything wro-"

Hannibal smirked at seeing his beloved nervous and flustered in his presence. "There's no need for an explanation, it's all right Will."

When dessert passed and the wine consumed, the two men stood in place near the fireplace in the office. The warm hearth popped and crackled as Will stared at the hue tinted flames for some time. When he had enough, he walked over and leaned his hip against the desk not caring if he wasn't allowed to sit although he would never admit it. The older man joined him.

"Have you ever thought what our lives would be like if we never met? I imagine I would still be working on boat motors and you'd be still treating patients and finally settling down with a wife."

"They undoubtedly could never capture your radiance nor entrap my heart as you did."

Will was obviously stiff. Unable to form words or facial expressions. Hannibal initially believed something on his mind was preventing him from speaking. "It appears I make you nervous in more ways than one." His voice dropped an octave as he whispered in his ear. Like a serpent, he slowly leaned in, giving a nibble on Will's earlobe which the young gentlemen shuddered, gripping the edges of the desk with resistance. He curled his ankle underneath the doctor's bringing him between his legs. His knuckles held onto the vest as their mouths crashed into each other's.

Dr Lecter was drowning in this man's orbit. A moth drawn to an inflammable light in darkness. One of his hands curved around the base of Will's neck feeling those waves of chocolate between his fingers while the other flex gripping his backside tenderly. He held him against his body and felt his desire which he languidly pushed into him as a sign he was enjoying this.

He stood back and offered his hand to Will who accepted and followed him out of the study. They took their time stealing kisses against walls or the staircase soaking in the intimacy of it all. Walking into the lavish bedroom, the memories of what happened before flew into Will's mind like a gentle tidal wave. A few tapestries hung on the walls along with a suit of armor standing in the corner. Giant oriental curtains covering huge windows, paintings plastered everywhere with soft rugs beneath their feet. He could sense the aroma of Hannibal just by standing in this space.

“May I?” The doctor came closer and ghosted his fingers over the profiler’s cheek pausing for permission. He nodded and Hannibal took his time removing and peeling layers upon layers of clothing from his and Will’s bodies until they finally were nude. Will’s knees felt the bed underneath him as he was laid down on his back. He turned to hide his face, inhaling the faintness of Hannibal on the pillow. Probably to avoid his gaze as he usually did when it came to moments like this.

The psychiatrist noticed this and tenderly curled his fingers under Will’s chin to look into his eyes. They swept across him, storing every inch of skin, bump and curve to his memory palace.

If he had his way, he would sketch and paint the beauty lying on his bed immortalizing him as he saw him. A true beauty. His soulmate. The other half of his heart. They will never be apart after tonight. “My Endymion.” Hannibal whispered. His maroon irises showed devotion and affection in the presence of a lovely creature bearing its vulnerability to a god. Not just any god. His god.

Will heard a bottle open but it did not see what it was and yet he felt more nervous than he’d ever been. He hiked his knee towards his chest letting his lover cautiously insert a finger inside him. The man tensed up a little at the sensation of being lavished upon merely more than just him pleasuring women as best as he could. He never imagined himself to be on the opposite side and he wanted more. He wanted it all. “Are you alright?” The doctor kissed his eyelids as a sign of comfort.

“I do not wish to hurt you. Have you been tested recently?”

“I'm clean. Please, keep going.” He pleaded as a second finger entered followed by a third until he got the idea of his hole being opened preparing him for the big moment. Hannibal withdrew his fingers carefully as Will groaned quietly at their loss. He heard the bottle open and close a second time. He felt the blunt length of his boyfriend’s cock pressing against him edging into him as Will inhaled deeply and exhaled.

Hannibal felt his lamb’s hand on his lower back. His fingers denting his hips forward slowly easing in. He pulled almost all the way out then advanced, earring a breathless grunt from his partner. Will’s nails frisk Hannibal’s broad shoulders. The muscles were sharp, firm and strong. He wondered how he was able to keep his form in such physicality for a man of his age. The blades of bone clenched and unclenched as the thrusts began to pick up a bit. Teeth sucked marks onto skin as a sign not of possessiveness nor ownership but accepting him as his equal.

The doctor tilted his hips to hit Will’s prostate just right as the profiler moaned a bit louder than normal. He ceased to silence his cries of pleasure but Hannibal nudged into his neck whispering with a slight roughness. “I want to hear you. It feels good, does it not?”

Will coiled, tightening his legs around Hannibal’s waist as he tried to form words as the connection of skin on skin made their bodies steam up with thin sheens of perspiration. It almost looked like they were glowing with a pale dim snowy light. He gyrated upward bottoming out in the raptors of lovemaking.

The sounds of their voices moaning in heavenly rhapsody was music to Hannibal's ears. Will's form bowed off the bed as he came with a cry approximating a scream that he felt he tore a lung out. Hannibal continued to fuck him as he too came inside Will spilling his essence. He brought his mouth to his and kissed him.

"Thank you," he whispered, feeling feather-light. It should be a crime to have such gifted fingers…and what a mouth…

"Did that please you?"

He nodded, breathing heavily, his eyes a little wild. His chest swelled with pride as he thought of introducing his nymph to all the places on his lithe physique he could bring pleasure to, one by one.

Will's eyes watered a bit. A single tear with the rhythm of a stream strolled down his cheek making Hannibal catch it wiping it so delicately. "Are you saddened?"

The other man shuffled his head implying no fearing he was going to ruin what just transpired. "That..felt so..good. I never experienced anything like that before. I'm sorry if I wasn't very..active." He blushed. "I didn't do much to please you."

He stroked flushing skin lightly with the tip of his finger. "You pleased me a great deal. I know you were nervous, but I enjoyed myself tremendously. We belong to one another now —in every way." He wrapped his arms around Will's back, lifting him from the bed and switching positions so that he was flat on his back and he lay on top of him. As he rested on his chest, he whispered Dante's words to him in Italian:

"Color di perle ha quasi in forma, quale convene a donna aver, non for misura; ella è quanto de ben pò far natura; per esemplo di lei bieltà si prova.

De li occhi suoi, come ch'ella li mova, escono spirti d'amore inflammati,

che fèron li occhi a qual che allor la guati, e passan sì che 'l cor ciascun retrova: voi le vedete Amor pinto nel viso,

là 've non pote alcun mirarla fiso."

He reached up to touch his face, and he leaned his cheek against his hand, closing his eyes. Pressing his thumb against his mouth, feeling his full lower lip, and tugging him forward into a passionate kiss. Ther hearts quickened, thinking the moment of their union was imminent.

Will reeled away but still kept his body close not wanting the embers to die out so quickly. "Too much has happened to not talk about us. Where..this is going now. However pleasurable the distractions are."

"I would change many things but not that we ended up here." Hannibal's knuckles traced shapes while caressing Will's spine with sincerity. He wanted to keep him here and never let him leave.

"I thought at first I meant nothing to you. I was so wrong about you."

“You had a right to question everything, Particularly my feelings for you.”

“What kind of feelings?”

“All of them. I cannot describe what you brought upon me. I assumed I was your destruction, and not salvation. It is the reverse.”

“I had to deal with my feelings about you as well. I thought I was being toyed around like a puppet controlled by someone who wanted to see me suffer simply for no reason, I came to realize that you needed to confront the demons nestled within your own soul in order to obtain some kind of peace if such a thing is real and allow both the light and dark sides to co-exist.”

Hannibal brushed his nose against Will’s before leaving the bed momentarily to the bathroom. He quietly returned with a washcloth and began cleaning with such care that Will almost felt like Kore before her transformation into the queen of the dead. A not so pure yet kind of pure individual who catches the eye of someone that is supposed to be evil yet it turns out he’s misunderstood and overall a super attractive man that can pick anyone however said handsome doctor chose a plain shy animal lover to be his without any questions asked. None. Zero.

Tucking the navy covers over themselves to conceal their naked skin from prying eyes and not from each other, both men nestled together once more to share body warmth radiating with a closeness one can only dream about. Sleepy and sated in a large, white cloud-like bed.

The dark angel whispered to his muse in all languages he could speak until near midnight.

Framklyn’s apartment

He had an upper middle class background, so there was an excuse for his sudden change in viciousness. His mother was a respected surgeon in the Boston area. She now prefers to wither away from the public eye, settling to her early retirement in her brownstone. Truth be told, Franklyn had always felt that he was destined to be in the top upper class of society. It all started when he was eighteen:

Fresh out of university, he took a post working for a summer at the Ivy Hotel. Here he observed the rich and famous guests of the hotel wearing leather goods and carrying out expensive luggage. It was more than just functionality. Wealth was a status symbol that divided the “haves” from the “have-nots”. He noticed the quality of luxury handbags and clothing but mostly lineages.

The aristocracy of the world’s most elite families combined with centuries of tradition made an impression on the young man. Generations of genetics conceived a plethora of valuable specimens.

Twas a private party that the establishment was hosting when he met Hannibal Lecter for the very first time. He was by far the most sensual man he’d ever come across. He appeared very sexual too. His raw, smoldering carnality oozed from every pore. He could almost drink it.

He watched him shop for selective ingredients in artisan shops and fitted by master tailors. He noticed his approach to portray a confident definition of a European nobleman and the way women and men reacted to him. Studied his etiquette and put his knowledge of privilege to the test.

But he spurred him. He never looked at his body. He would avoid making the slightest of eye contact as if he wasn't there. He began to dress more professionally. He never glanced below his neck.

He tried to be humble and self-deprecating. He was unimpressed.

The more he refused his offers, the more he wanted him. The more he became obsessed with having him, the less he cared about receiving gifts in trade. He would give himself to him freely if he would only look at him with desire.

But he didn't.

So in the spring, he was transferred to his office following a detailed rap sheet of his behavior from the other nine doctors who provided help but proved unsucessful due to the amount of him projecting onto the therapists and not focusing on treatment.

Unfortunately for Franklyn, when he had the opportunity to show up to his appointment and discuss recent events, he was eager to see if their session could turn into a dinner invitation and a possible trip abroad. He had been on his best behavior so far. Hopefully, he will stop resisting.

It backfired. A man a bit older than him sat in the waiting room. He was dressed like he scrambled bits of clothing together and presented himself as approachable. Dark student glasses adorned a somewhat pretty face with eyes that looked blue and green with a hint of scruff. The door opened and Dr Lecter stepped out and allowed the nerdy boy in without hesitation.

"Mr Federioux, will you please wait a moment longer. There is something important I must discuss with Mr Graham."

"S-sure." He answered with a tiny squeak that could not come out of his body with fidgetiness. It turned into an hour and a minute. He dragged the heel of his shoe back and forth along the carpet as a distraction to avoid pulling his hair out in being ignored.

Once it was over, the geek left with an aura of good posture which made Franklyn officially confused as to what took place in the office. It bothered him to know if a code of ethics was crossed. He clearly had the best interests for Dr Lecter's reputation to avoid accusations.

He had a dalliance with a professor of Italian studies while he was in therapy. The man was handsome and educated. The physical aspect was lackluster leaving him disappointed. His standards and anyone regardless who did not measure up was not worth screwing. He kept in touch with Dominic Amato while he was giving lectures across Europe when their affair ended.

He'd been ignoring his inbox for months. Having a glass of vintage Bolliger champagne, he had found in his mother's wine cabinet, he checked his account. And there sitting there in his emails was a bomb. It was the kind of bomb that made him thirst.

Headshots of the elusive doctor emerging from his stately mansion-like home, driving his sleek rare Bentley, him mingling with members of foundations or colleagues. But it was the recent email that made the man smirk with greedful glee.

A scandalous list. One kept perfectly hidden within the walls of academic policy. He made double copies to store in a file in case whoever he decided to take to will need a credible source.

This will certainly make the Lecter family think twice about accepting Will. He grabbed his phone, dialed a number and waited for the other line to pick up. "Hello?"

"I need a favor. I forwarded a message that must be hand delivered to the address listed. If you fail, I will make damn sure a punishment is reserved for you. Do I make myself clear?"

"Yes." The person on the other line answered and hung up. The tone went dead signaling the marker. He tossed back his glass of wine, swallowing it whole and letting it simmer inside before resuming to look back at the photos of his object of desire.

Hannibal Lecter was perfect. The ideal gentlemen. The embodiment of temptation. The most beautiful of sins. The most prized bloodline barely clinging in a changing world. He waited far too long to simply be looked at. Be noticed by a man who has everything.

He will take everything that Will holds dear. He nearly almost axed him and that was ruined. It looks he's going to have think bigger and set a trap for him so crafty that it will have him running to save who he had picked to torture. And this time, he will wipe Will fucking Graham off the face of the Earth.

Hannibal's house

The bed was bathed in sunshine. The gauzy curtains shone from the floor-to-ceiling windows. He was laying on his side facing him, breathing softly, watching *him* sleep. His curls did not fall out of place, his cheeks were pink from the warmth of the room due to their activity the previous night.

The sleeping beauty slowly opened his eyes to take in his surroundings noticing the other man in bed with him. He certainly was enjoying the view. "You're awake."

"So are you." Hannibal smirked. It was so rare to see him in such a vulnerable state. The bed covers were deliciously rumpled smelling faintly of sex and sandalwood.

"I was thinking about what led us here. This whole courtship idea and the uh..sex. Not..that..it wasn't great…"

“Of course it was.” He tugged Will closer to which the younger man still felt like a blushing virgin all over again despite *literally* and *figuratively* been deflowered. The ache in his lower side was a good type of pain. The kind of pain that can make him still walk after.

“We have a lot of reasons for this: not just a simple attraction.” Will spoke softly as he carded his fingers through his lover’s downy chest. He belongs here. In Hannibal’s bed avoiding the worry and basking in the afterglow of a wonderful evening. He had too much on his mind prior and didn’t want whatever topic came up to stop him from feeling happy for once in his entire life.

They kissed again. This time relinquishing their souls as one. Will’s other hand held onto his shoulder as he was showered with how much Hannibal loves him.

The doorbell rings making Will’s eyes widen a bit at the possibility of being caught in a compromising position. Then again, he hardly was the type of person to be the center of attention. He gazed out the bedroom door as Hannibal’s eyes followed him.

“Last time someone rang my doorbell this early, it was a census taker.” He sighed, sounding patient but secretly harbored an annoyance at whoever decided to interrupt this special morning. The doctor easily climbed out of his haven and grabbed a crimson sweater from his drawer with Will quietly dressing himself underneath the sheets.

Descending the stairs, he attempted to hide the tell-tale hard on with a robe he hid somewhere, the silver haired Doctor approached the oak colored frame and saw Beverly waiting. “Hannibal.”

“Ms. Katz.” He greeted the female agent causally and allowed her to walk inside leading her into the kitchen. “What can I do for you?”

“Two more bodies were found in the last twenty four hours. It looks like another Tarot murder.” she wrapped up her reasoning for dropping by.

“Where were they found?”

“40 miles inside Virginia. Twenty miles deep in Pocahontas State Park. They were moved post mortem from somewhere within a ten mile radius of the nearest cabin.”

“I see.”

The woman noticed a head peeking out around the coroner seeing Will disheveled and dressed in Hannibal’s white button up shirt and his own boxers. The dark red love bites on his neck didn’t faze her seeing how this alibi had checked out, now knowing where they were all night.

“Hey, Will.”

“Hi.” He waved in shyness at being busted by his best friend by rolling out of bed and walking in on a super important meeting.

The woman looked at the doctor then her best friend, undoubtedly sensing the electricity between them had grown the last time. She wasn't blind to see that they harbored something that can't be defined by modern standards of love. "See you at work?"

Will replied, "Yeah." And with that she left saying her goodbyes for the moment. Silence coated the hall until the young man walked over and wrapped his arms around Hannibal from behind. His head fitted perfectly inhaling the delicious intoxicating scent from his skin underneath the sweater. "Thank god, it was her. Otherwise, I would've had my gun at the ready. Did something happen? I'm sorry for interrupting."

"Ms Katz came to inform there were more corpses unearthed. I suppose she will give details when you arrive. You do not need to apologize Will."

"I am a bit hungry and I need to shower. May I use your bathroom?"

"You may. Although I may be tempted to join you."

"You should. I'm surprised that I can still walk after last night."

The doctor sensed butterflies in his stomach in being touched after spending the night with Will. He hardly ever had anyone stay the morning much less take off without a word. He couldn't describe exactly what he was truly feeling but he wanted to explore it with the man he cares about more than life itself. He lifted Will and bridal carried him back up the stairs, passing the bedroom and into the bathroom.

Suffice to say, the shower was something he hardly imagined would happen. Him pressed up against the tiles while Hannibal was on his knees taking him in his mouth. Clouds of stem made it seem like another erotic fantasy of Will's be brought to life. Droplets of water clung to their forms like sea glass. The brunette raked his fingers through his lover's hair as he continued his praising.

"Fuck," he hisses. His hips writhe as the pleasure kept going. The pace itself acted like a dance of some kind. An intimate one. A dance of bodies twisting in various positions. Hands caressing and fingers touching places most scared.

"Please. I want you inside me." Will begged. He didn't want to come without getting thoroughly fucked for the second time.

The doctor rises up looking at him. Hannibal gently grips Will's chin, coaxing him to look into his eyes. "What do you want, Will?" The man's cheeks turned a stunning shade of rose enhancing his fragile beauty even more.

He answers breathlessly, "I want all of you." while the blood in his veins rushed with excitement. Turning over, his front met the glass wall stinging his skin a bit with a chill. Without taking his eyes off him, Hannibal sinks into him at a deliciously slow pace. Will closes his eyes relishing the fullness, the exquisite length of his girth inside instinctively tilting Will's pelvis up to meet him, to join with him, groaning loudly. He eases back and very slowly fills him again. Will's fingers find their way into his silken unruly hair, and he oh-so-slowly moves in and out again.

The doctor starts moving slowly then a gentle but rough pounding of wet skin echoing not holding back on and neither was his beloved whose orgasm began to tense and tremor his body magnificently. The release was mind numbing like a nuclear atom colliding with quantum and morphing into an explosion of heat. A million times hotter than a furnace or the Big Bang. By the time it was over, the two men could hardly keep their hands to themselves as they towel dried the other with a reverence preserved.

When they were finally able to leave the bedroom dressed appropriately walking into the kitchen close to each other, they did not notice that the rest of the family had arrived sometime during the early morning and already prepared a feast.

“It seems some things have indeed changed.” Mischa said eying her brother with an amused expression combined with joy in seeing the proximity between Will and Hannibal. She usually refuses to interfere in her older sibling’s intimate relations but with the latest addition to the household, she found herself to be involved due to mainly secretly wanting Hannibal be happy for the rest of his life with Will.

Since meeting him and Abigail, she sensed a new perspective on soulmates. The so-called ‘expectations’ of modern romance have in a way squandered on the little details. Every relationship is different and almost all do tend to last or part ways. It did not mean that love was expelled forever. It can change and alter a human in vastly different circumstances.

Asteria meowed in reminding everyone that breakfast was waiting so they sat down to eat the marvelous simple feast.

The atmosphere once again was filled with a warmth that broke free bit by bit from the shackles of confinement. Like a butterfly opening its wings to take its first flight after hibernation. The integrity of a family like the Lecters seems like a perpetual fantasy. A family ripped from the pages of an old world novel. A painter’s dream to portrait. A writer’s inspiration. A follower to worship. They enjoyed the attention for however long they’ve been alive. The name itself was synonymous with mysticism, beauty, culture and aesthetics remnant of a history revered.

What made the Lecters stand apart from other noble families was their capacity to generosity in a world surrounded by greed. It certainly was not their fault that they were blessed with genetics that were extremely rare in the twenty-first century. A gallery of living deities. Their presence. No definitive vocabulary could comprehend how magnetic all of them were individually and as one.

All traveled from afar to take a peak of the family. Suitors were selected to grow the lineage but none succeeded to garner the attention of either member for long. Admiration soon swirled to jealousy due to rumors created by envious citizens scoffing from the attention on them rather than potential matches to form their own lines. The Lecters made appearances once again stepping into a realm suited to their every need and keeping an eye on anyone who wished to harm them all. Curses were cast upon the family simply to bring a mighty house to its knees yet failed unanimously in doing so and the House of Lecter continued to flourish from the ruins of Carthage to the trenches of Rome and beyond, its strength not weaken into the modern age.

Abigail's eyes turned to each and every one of her adopted family. Wise in wisdom yet deadly if angered or insulted. She could have never imagined her destiny being altered to join a family whose story hailed as one of defiance nearly annihilated more throughout the centuries since its creation. Her perseverance determined her ground as did Will's. They belonged here now.

Once the feast had been finished, Hannibal began to pick up the silverware. His mother and Mischa decided to help rather than let him do it on his own. The doctor felt praised and affection knowing everyone was all brought together as a family. The type of family that would sit in conversation that would last for hours. The type of family that had decency and class than the average aristocracy.

Simonetta's eyes look to her son staring at Will with such love, it made her think about her own story with her husband and how much they care for one another after all this time. Seeing it passed down to her children never failed to make her heart leap with joy and her eyes almost filled with tears. Will and Abigail connected the family even now more than ever and it had every intent in keeping it secure.

The happiness was rudely interrupted by the ring of the doorbell. Abigail excused herself to see who was at the door. Several minutes passed until she returned to the dining room with a blank envelope.

She handed it to Will who broke the seal open revealing a handwritten letter along with a one page document. The letter reads in part: *Secrets have a way of coming out. I certainly know about yours Doctor. How much is Will worth to you? I bet he wouldn't want you to know about this. Scandalous is it not? If you want your name to be saved from frivolous gossip, end your relationship with Will Graham immediately or you may find yourself on the center page of the Sun. The clock is ticking.*

Thomas looked up from the newspaper he was reading noticing his eldest son and Will looking at something with great concern. "What is it son?"

The doctor quietly handed both the letter and the document to his father. The other members gathered around the matriarch to see what the envelope contained. To say they were surprised would be a big understatement. They were but not at the doctor nor Will. Angry at whomever sent this mystery package initiating a threat to dismantle a relationship neither were willingly to step away from.

"It appears this fellow has developed an unhealthy obsession with Hannibal. He has no boundaries. No respect for the terror he is causing. Nor caring to seek help. The disillusion will grow more until he suffers a physiological crack in his mind which can lead to unfortunate death." said Silas with a manner of worry at what his future brother-in-law is facing.

Mischa added on to her partner's point of view. "He transferred his emotions. Developing feelings of possession when the object in return does not reciprocate. In this matter is you my big brother."

An invisible growl rumbled in Hannibal's chest. He knew precisely well who was behind the letter and the document. Lady Murasaki then spoke with a gentle voice, "We will leave to let the both of you speak." And with that, the group retreated to another room in the house leaving them in the dining room. A slow pause loomed over until Will gave the first words.

"The names were people I've interacted with in high school and while I attended college. Most of the encounters were platonic except Molly who I had a steady relationship with. We both willfully consented to sleep together. H-How did Franklyn get that list?!" Will stammered as he ran his fingers through his hair in frustration as his privacy had been violated once again. Only now it became personal.

Hannibal placed the document aside and held Will's hand. "We can talk with my lawyer and discuss a plan to thwart the intruder off. I will not let him hurt you." His voice softened to give his boy peace. His knuckles barely pressed against warm peach skin to let him understand and know he was here for whatever he needed.

"Thank you" Will whispered.

Will's classroom

The young professor was at his desk grading the assignments his students handed before the holiday break. The sound of nothing soothed his nerves. Sitting alone in an empty lecture hall with no one around certainly would give a normal person anxiety, and maybe a bit of paranoia.

A pair of heeled boots walking on worn out carpet made him look up from the spread out to see Beverly holding several evidence bags. "Where did you find those?" He pointed with his pen.

"We extradited a search warrant for Frankie's house and boy oh boy did we find a whole lot more than we thought." Her dark eyes told only half of the story but her words held much.

Will's eyes sauntered down to the bags containing important details on the stalking case. His own case. A tire iron with smears of still fresh blood. A picture frame of his boyfriend. One of Hannibal's shirts and a pair of his briefs. And finally, a leather bound journal along with burglary tools. He opened a drawer to grab a pair of latex gloves from his briefcase, opening up the bags and examining each one.

The clothing of his boyfriend in the possession of Franklyn made Will nearly puke in disgust. He must have used his kit to jimmy pick the lock easily breaking in without no one to see. He did not want to even imagine the man walking around like he lives there. Touching and trying on his partner's clothes was a breach of security and possibly getting himself off on them which is more horrifying.

"We even found the exact brand of your aftershave plus copycats of your clothing. He even went as far as to embroider his own initials on the tags. This guy is copying you just so he can snag your man for himself. I'm assuming that's not the first time he's tried."

Will opens the journal. He flips through the pages. They're all pictures of Hannibal. Handwritten passages going back a long time. Perhaps before he himself entered the picture. He reads one of the entries. “October 27, 8:01. Hannibal leaves the house, gets into car. I love the way he walks so confidently and controlled. Enters a tailor's shop, smiling. The sun shines on his face highlighting his perfection. So beautiful.”

He finds one entry on him. It reads in part as the others. “November 17, 2:01. Will is resting against a tree in the front yard. Nothing about him is attractive. What do people see in him that makes them flock just to spend time with him? He is an ugly duckling in a swan filled world.” He quietly closes it and places it back inside the bag. His eyes looked at Beverly.

“Anything about you?”

“Him writing about how much he loathes me because I exist. All because I was born with a pretty face and dating an attractive man who treats me like the most cherished being on Earth.”

“You know how to control your emotions. He doesn’t. You melt when Hannibal does something whether it’d be a home cooked meal or pleasuring you until you reach nirvana. Franklyn probably had some luck but not the type of luck my best friend is getting on a daily basis.”

“I hardly see how that’s relevant but I see your point.” He then noticed Beverly pointing at her neck then at his. “Do I have something on my face?”

She asked, “Is that a hickey?” She inched down to see the small purple blotch on Will’s neck. He slapped his hand over it with his face turning scarlet.

“You got deflowered?! So what happened? How was it? Did he fit the expectations?”

Still flushing red, Will answered those three questions as best he could without sounding so embarrassed. “He invited me to dinner. We shared dessert together and then went to his office. We talked and the next thing I know we started kissing. Like the good kind of kissing. We ended up in his bedroom, clothes off. He used his hands and mouth touching me in ways I never thought possible. You can guess what happens after.”

“Your reinstated v-card is now swiped. Doctor Hottie is officially off the market. What are you gonna do with the world’s sexiest man?”

“Try to make every moment count for as long as he’ll have me.”

Hannibal’s office

He was in session with a patient. A new face. Masculine and beautiful. His hazel eyes were a stark contrast to his pale ivory skin. His short midnight hair framed the jawline quite nicely.

The doctor’s eyes manually gazed upon a titanium band on the left fourth finger. He’s married.

“Are you content in your marriage?”

“I am. My husband can be vivacious. He likes being the center of attention and I love him very much.”

“Hmm.” The doctor agreed. “Is there anything else you wish to share?”

“No. I appreciate the guidance. Thank you for seeing me.”

“None the wiser.”

Outside Hannibal’s office

The doctor was closing the door behind him, locking it into place. As soon as he turned his body around, Franklyn appeared out of thin air.

“I apologize if I startled you. Can we talk somewhere private?”

Hannibal was indeed uncomfortable in his presence. His posture was stiff and timid. Not at all like his usual self.

“Mr Froideveaux, what are you doing here?”

“Can a man come and surprise his lover at work?” The shorter man teased cringingly trying to get under his skin. He clearly was failing.

“Did you pay someone to drop off a list at my home unannounced to convince me that Will is a philanderer?”

Franklyn scoffed trying to switch the conversation in a different direction. “What are you talking about? That’s absurd. I mean..you should be asking Will why that list showed up at your house.”

“You need to leave now.”

“Feisty. I know you’re not going to call the authorities. I’ll leave but you need to hear what I have to say.” The doctor was not in the mood to talk. He had his mind on more important matters.

“I know what kind of man Will is. A shy reclusive loner flaunting his eyes and people just can’t resist getting him alone and have their way with him. I mean the engineering major, the teacher’s assistant and the linguistics professor? Not to mention Molly was the only woman he passed himself off with before almost tying the knot which I bet you didn’t know about, do you?”

“Will has explained his past. The list was created as a fabrication to deter his feelings for me. I must ask once again for you to leave.”

“I didn't mean to start a scene at the ballet the other night but if Will has cheated, he does not have the right to interfere with our relationship.”

I do not know you Mr Froideveaux and you do not know me and I intended to keep it that way.”

“Ever since we met, there’s been sparks.”

“You were a patient. That was all. Please leave now.”

“Why are you denying it?! Damn it!” Franklyn yelled at the doctor which attracted the attention of a few onlookers. “Lover’s quarrel” He said, faking a ruse.

“Hannibal, I want you to listen to me very carefully when I tell you this. You..are not allowed to see Will again under any circumstances. Do you understand?” The cheese man ignored all warning signs getting into the doctor’s personal space to which a very familiar face took notice.

“Hey! Hey! What the hell do you think you’re doing asshole?! He said leave.” Beverly shoved Mr Froideveaux off. Her face in Fed mode was not to be trifled with.

“This has nothing to do with you Miss Katz, does it?” Franklyn asked in a tone spitting venom.

A police car stopped at the scene with two uniformed officers and a lawyer to arrest the intruder. “You wanna bet?” Katz asked Franklyn as the policemen cuffed his hands and placed him in the back.

The lawyer walked up to the doctor and Katz saying, “He’ll be arranged at trial. I need the two of you and Will to be there. Guy’s an amateur into believing he can break up a relationship. He’s not off the rails..yet. Only a matter of time until he does. Let’s hope we don’t see anymore of him. We’ll be in touch.”

The patrol car drove off leaving the psychiatrist and the federal officer still standing. The emotions and the adrenaline of having to tell someone no was already becoming a hassle culminating in a series of harassment and threats that were internally affecting Hannibal and those around him. He’s never been afraid of anything but today he was. Frightened of what could happen to the man he gave his heart to several hours prior. This is a nightmare he wishes he could awaken from but knowing he had to fight a foe setting their sights on destroying everything he treasures. Well, that is a challenge he will not stand down from.

Chapter 15

Chapter Notes

> The novel Hannibal and Will read together in the woods is Death in Venice which is a novella written by German author Thomas Mann published in 1922.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Beacon Hill

Six weeks earlier

A goddess in the flesh sat in an indoor cafe within a rich suburb. The weather was no less cold given the change in season. Her ebony hair in waves of midnight. Her attire consisted of a white winter coat, beige gloves, vintage cat eye sunglasses and a rare Coach Nina Tote to match.

The rim on her ceramic cup of espresso was stained with an imprint of her bold red lipstick. She sighed looking around to see if her guest had arrived or fled to avoid meeting in a public place. It spoke too soon when a man sat across from her. His clothing had dark slacks that were a bit faded. A pinstripe tie with a baby blue buttoned top with a murky brown blazer. Dark black hair with brown eyes made contact with her sharp gaze.

“It takes guts to come here and meet me. I wonder why that is.”

“The details of your worthless life do not interest me.” The countess removed her glasses to reveal a face modern women would highly be envious of. Evermore, Franklyn was astounded by her loveliness.

“Who are you?”

“My name is Ms.Sforza or Mrs.Lecter if that name, how do you say it rings a bell?” Franklyn was being hit in the face with surprise after surprise. How many more times can he take it?

“Are you a relative of Hannibal’s? An aunt twice removed? A long lost cousin?” The woman chuckled at the boy’s questions thinking, *How gullible can this tiny man be?*

“No, frankly not. I am his mother. Does that have your attention Mr Froideveaux?”

“Y-you’re Hannibal’s mother?!”

“I would give my thanks to Will Graham and of course dear Abigail for my family becoming whole.”

There's the name. He despised the man with every ounce of his life. Why was he so special? "Signora, help me understand something. How is it that a man like your son accepts Will after everything he has done to tarnish the good Lecter name? Even going so far as to take in a young lady who does not share his noble blood?"

"My son loves Abigail as if she were his own child."

"She isn't. And I do not understand how someone like her can be welcomed. A constant reminder that neither she nor Will are good enough to join a family such as yours."

"Do not speak of my family that way! You do not know them and *we* do not know you."

"I'm asking you to open your eyes, Signora. Your son will never be happy with Will!" Franklyn's voice raised as he leaned over the table to speak right into the countess's face believing his so-called claim would do the deed. It did the exact opposite. An opposite she wished did not come to it.

"Here, take this." She handed a document to Franklyn who swiped it from her hand and opened it.

"A restraining order? Did you truly believe a piece of paper would keep me away from the man I love?"

The countess scoffed at the declaration. "What you feel for my son is not love. It is an obsession. You wish to possess him. You are more of a fool than I imagine. *Arrivederci*." She puts her glasses back on and waved goodbye. Her bodyguards tailed behind her giving a sense of high valued protection catered to only the elite of the elite.

When the woman left, Franklyn unfolded the restraining orders to see an envelope encased in it. Emblazoned with the name and address of two prominent law firms based outside Boston. He hastily ripped open the letter and read the contents.

"What the hell?" He muttered. He held in his hands a cease- and- desist letter that accused him of several recent incidents of public defamation of character, aggravated assault, stalking and harassment. The letter threatened further action should he continue to make slanderous remarks about Doctor Lecter, Will or anyone involved. He shoved the papers in his jacket pocket not caring if they were crumpled. He left the cafe huffing in anger at being sidelined and ignored like he was nothing. Not as special nor perfect. His blood just kept getting hotter and hotter even thinking what his love rival and the psychiatrist could be doing right now. *Spending and lavishing on Will like a high powered escort. Or perhaps a concubine in a harem.* That is what he saw him as. A sad lonely soul aimlessly wandering a never ending path of fog. Hopelessly lost forever.

There was a force driving Hannibal and Will together that infuriated Franklyn. Just the mere thought of that ghastly boy in the doctor's office, his manor touching and contaminating the objects lying there. More so, his smelly fisherman hands caressing and demolishing the very beauty of Hannibal Lecter.

His attraction to the man was not just aesthetical. Physical yes. Sexually? Affirmative. He always wanted to run his hands across that skin. His form was sculpted to suit *his* vision of perfection. An all powerful being for his eyes only. No one else deserved nor anyone will have him. He surely wasn't going to let a doe eyed pretty boy fisherman keep gaining the upper hand in the game. It's time to set up his plan and put it in motion. It won't be a moment longer.

Will's house

He put the final touches on his attire for the date. Will was spending the day with his partner and their daughter on a picnic in a public park. Abigail suggested the dogs come along with the cat. It had taken Hannibal some time to consider the idea; eventually he agreed with it seeing as how the pack was important to Will as Aesteria was important to their daughter. The drive to their destination was nothing short of domestic bliss.

Loch Raven Reservoir

Miles and miles of trees doused in shades of red, orange and gold. The river was nothing short of magnificent carrying on for who knows how many kilometers. The trio and their furred companions settled on a perfect spot between the shade of trees with a spectacular view of the river.

A blanket was laid to secure space. Abigail and the dogs plus a feline were chasing one another playfully. Tails happily wagged with yips and barks. Her face lit up with a smile of pure joy as the dogs and cat were having fun. Her laugh was like sunshine on a warm spring day. The light filtering through the trees highlighted auburn tresses almost appearing as a sprite in fairy stories of old.

The doctor rested his back against the bark with a book in his lap while his beloved nestled against his side. Will's chin perched on Hannibal's shoulder as the psychiatrist read aloud to him in a gentle content voice. "And he saw in his not only all the glories he had loved from infancy, but all those milder beauties which he had once found reflected in tender phrases, the discreet charm of an enjoyer's love-making or the radiant charm through intellectual conversation. His boy looked truly good."

The professor then said this, "Gustav was aware of Tadzio's beauty and how that same type of beauty can make art and poetry come alive with wonder. But it could also mean feelings of regret for losing one's youth and age with no return."

"The portrayal of beauty that captivates humans is a complex blend of visual stimuli and the messages it conveys to our minds and memories. It goes beyond the conscious level, reaching into the depths of the brain, stirring emotions as a reminder of past events. Thus the experience of beauty becomes a profound amalgamation of visual delight, and a pleasurable connection to one's past."

"It sounds like you've experienced it first hand. Perhaps as a young man, you and Mischa were admired and adored for intelligence but the beauty was all anyone saw and not the

human underneath. Like Narcissus infatuated with his own reflection who died as he did after rejecting so many who were in love with him yet no one he believed could be equal to his appearance."

Hannibal hummed in agreement. "Of all the beauties in this world, no one has caught my eye as you did. A living work of art." Hannibal closes the book then places it next to him and turns a little to face Will. His eyes still held fascination and passion from the night before when he and his beloved gave themselves to each other. Their hearts and souls intertwined and unbreakable.

The professor leaned to press his mouth against the psychiatrist's in an affectionate greeting. Will could feel the doctor's hands cupping his face delicately as the kiss continued. Sliding his knee in between the man's legs to get closer to him and it worked. Their hands wandered over soft woolen fabric. Hannibal's expert hands cradled Will's scrumptious bottom which the young academic gasps at being touched intimately in a public place where anyone could walk in on them being lost in their fire for one another. The sound of a branch snapping in the distance interrupted them. Dusting themselves off, they followed to where Abigail stood with the dogs and saw the silhouette of someone watching, observing everything.

"Who is that?" She asked. Her demeanor changed instantly. One of the dogs sprinted towards the mystery person.

"Stay here." He said to both his partner and Abigail as he chased after the animal. The adrenaline was coursing through his body as he followed the dog to catch whoever was spying on them. He then heard a scream and dashed towards the source of it. Pushing through branches and leaves, he finally saw what or who the dog was staring at. He hesitated to pull his gun from his waistband not knowing if the stranger intended to harm him. Diana snarled, her muzzle curled back to show sharp incisors not caring if the intruder kept trying to get away.

"Diana, stand down." The canine heeled reverting to a crouched position with her ears down as a defense. He walked closer and saw the face. No one he recognized. "Who are you?"

."Private investigator." The man flashed his badge. He stood up quickly facing the former officer.

"Who hired you? Why are you following us?" Will asked. His hand nearly touched his automatic.

The man huffed before answering the question. "Let's just say I don't like the guy. Total creep. He wanted me to tail your boyfriend. He's been obsessed with the doctor for years and he asked for a favor. He threatened to blackmail me if I didn't do what he said I got everything in my car.."

Graham followed the man while Diana quietly returned to the spot where the pack and her owner's partner and daughter waited. It had been some time before Will came back to the spot where Hannibal and Abigail were waiting for him.

Neither spoke as they resume the picnic but can't help worrying just how much Franklyn knew about Hannibal that not even Will may not know everything and it frightened him. But if Franklyn wants his life then he's going to try much harder to do it.

Franklyn's apartment

A light bulb turned on to reveal a space doused in a red light. A photo room. Photos hung on a clothesline. Snaps of his target through the years until now. He walked to a faceless mannequin with a cut out of him taped onto the head. *You never lie. The camera doesn't lie either. It sees everything. Every folicle, every frown, every micro expression on your face.*

He lightly touched it. *You love your boyfriend. Don't worry, you'll forget about him soon. I promise.* The man soon walks over to his closet gazing at the clothes he made to appear just like him to seek and earn his approval.

Photos of his love rival with his paramour were scratched out violently and replaced with his own face. *You need time. I'll give you time.*

He soon laid down in his bedroom upstairs. He coated the sheets with his target's scent. It smelled so good. He wanted to taste him and seal the taste forever. *I wish I could give you everything. I wish I could touch you.*

John Joseph Moakley Courthouse: October 16, 7:30 am

"I examined Mr Froideveaux and found him to be highly delusional. His sense of reality is warped, he does not understand the charges against him. He believes his relationship with Dr Lecter was consensual." said a former therapist spoke about Franklyn's behavior.

Beaumont who was assigned as Dr Lecter's lawyer firmly asked, "Does Franklyn know assault is a crime?"

"Yes and he is deeply upset about it."

"Upset? Doesn't that indicate remorse?"

"Well, that's where it gets complicated. Franklyn is devastated that Dr Lecter was assaulted but he maintains he alone controls every aspect of their relationship."

"Nothing further."

Dr Lecter then took the stand following the testimony. "The attack occurred in therapy which triggered his emotional stability."

"Have you ever engaged in sexual intercourse with Mr Froideveaux?"

"No, of course not."

“Are you in love or attracted to Mr Froideveaux?” Hannibal looked at the A.D.A then to Franklyn who slightly nodded with a smirk on his face. It disgusted him. “No.” He said bluntly.

“What? Why are you lying? Just tell the truth. Tell them you love me.”

The judge was not having it. “Counselor, control your client.” The defendant’s attorney tried to ease his anxiety.

“The fantasized relationship is based on transference.”

“In layman’s terms.”

“He has confused the intimacy of our corrective therapy. In his mind, it has melded and he desperately believes we are in love.”

“Oh, come on, we are!” Mr Froidevaux gets up, walks towards him getting closer and closer spitting his claims. “Why are you denying it? Just tell them you love me. Why won’t you do that?!”

The judge bangs the gravel twice as a sign of distress as two uniformed court officers removed Mr Froidevaux from the courtroom. The man kept saying “Please, just tell them you love me.” as he was restrained and taken away Given light of the events, the judge had to declare a mistrial.

Outside of the building, Dr Lecter, Will and their lawyers gathered together to discuss whether or not the case would move forward. “Judge deemed him unfit to stand trial. He’s being admitted to the State Hospital for the Criminally Insane.”

“The BSHCI is run by Fredrick Chilton. A smart guy and an ass. I almost lost a case because a former patient claims that he used unorthodox methods to treat him.”

“A lobotomy. What was he thinking using a 19th century torture technique? Was he investigated?”

“Charges were dropped and the patient moved to a psychiatric hospital out of state."

Will sighed heavily. This was a lot to handle and he did not know if he could take it anymore. “So, what can we do now?”

His lawyer Isaiah Holmes said “Well, the good thing is that Franklin can no longer gain access to you or Hannibal. If he did escape, he’ll be caught again and get the max. Go home and get some rest. We’ll be in touch.” All of them went their separate ways.

Baltimore State Hospital For The Criminally Insane

Franklyn was walking back and forth in his cell. Given that he was here no less than an hour already had gotten a grip. The sound of heels faintly clicking made the man stand up hoping it would be *him* . Except it wasn’t. It was his own mother.

“Hello Franklyn. Looks like karma got to you.”

“What are you doing here? Shouldn’t you be retiring in your fancy brownstone?”

“I just came to see how my son, who had high standards, fell so low. It hurts doesn’t it?”

“Everyone keeps looking at me like I’m the bad guy but I’m not.”

“Well, you’re not the good guy either, that’s for sure.”

“It’s the truth!”

“Oh, Frankie, you’re driving me nuts! It’s one thing to do what you did and it’s another thing to pretend you’re all innocent and it’s no big deal.”

“I’m just pointing out the facts.”

“Well, I’m pointing out the principal.”

“What principal?”

“The “don’t stalk, harass and assault your psychiatrist who has a boyfriend” principal.”

“That is what I have been trying to tell you, Mom. They weren't boyfriends.”

“I’m not the one whose obsession had led me far down the hole just to end up in the nuthouse.”

“If we’re going to talk about people, let’s talk about Will Graham.”

“Will’s a good man.”

“And I’m not?”

“I didn’t say that. Will has had a very hard life.”

“Not any more difficult than mine.”

“It’s different.”

“Right. His dad died and mine just vanished. And if he wasn’t a freak with no self respect, Dr Lecter would've had him committed.”

“Enough! Enough!”

“What, I can’t say anything about him but everyone else can?!” His mother leaned closer to whisper a dire warning to her only living child. “May God have mercy on your soul.”

Hannibal’s home

“Dr Bloom is evaluating Mr Froideveaux ensuring he gets the help he needs.” Thomas tells everyone once the phone call ends. His wife sat by him with everyone in the living room.

“He was competent enough to plan a bombardment of hypocrisy. The human mind can trick us into believing anything.” Robert said while Lady Murasaki wrapped her arms around him to ease the discomfort of the events plaguing the family as of late.

“Seeing you and Will together must have been too much for him.” Smonetta's eyes looked at her son who sat at the harpsichord while his beloved leaned against him. Abigail stood nearby with Aesteria at her feet.

Will then said clearly. “I wish I had the chance to talk with him face-to-face and understand why he’s doing all of this.”

Thomas with his sense of integrity said, “It will pass. We will overcome this.”

The tuning of a familiar melody filled the air. The aria Will immediately be recognized as a favorite among lovers of classical music. It was soft. So soft it felt like standing on a beach somewhere, the waves slowly crashing, warm sand under bare feet and the salty sea air permeating the sky.

Soon enough the professor joined in. He wasn’t good at reading musical notes but could understand the tempo as much as he could remember. The keys flowed effortlessly under his fingers like water making a light sound that matched Hannibal’s.

Baltimore State Hospital for the Criminally Insane

“It’s me. I’ve been feeling a bit cooped up, so I decided to cut my stay short. I’ll be there shortly. Don’t start the party without me.

Chapter End Notes

The music Hannibal plays on the harpsichord is Goldberg Variations BWV 988 - 01 - Aria by Johann Sebastian Bach.

Chapter 16

Chapter Notes

> Content Reminder: Explicit sexual content. Please respect my work with kindness and love. Leave a kudo.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

BSHCI

The bright light of the hallway of the ward was no less pleasant let alone supervised. The echo of the man's expensive footwear were the only noises aside from the eyes of the animals in their cages staring at him. The visitor stopped at a peculiar cell facing the prisoner sitting on the other side of the bars. "Hello doctor." The voice hoovers like a malevolent ghost. The poor kind of ghost.

"Mr Froidevaux."

"I knew you'd come to see me. Couldn't stay away could you?" The cheese man stepped closer than was appropriate. He reached through the metal bars to brush imaginary lint off the lapels of his suit. Thankfully Lecter stood far enough that the man did not make physical contact.

"You are playing with fire."

"I hope so, Doctor. There's no reason to be unfriendly. The power to end this is in your hands." He gestured to his manhood, his mouth turning uncomfortably sinister. "Actually, it's a bit lower."

"Your father and mother separated. The resentment of love made you seek out partners attaching itself as a parasite to a host. When it did not fulfill what was promised, you moved on to find a replacement for what you can never and will not gain."

"You can always catch an insect with the smell of a flower but it is the blood that draws a carnivore."

"Do you truly believe after all this time, following me for nearly half of my lifetime that I would draw attention to you and not Will? You are mistaken."

"What makes Will Graham so perfect? There is nothing special about him. A sorrowful disgusting fisherman who pollutes greatness with a touch of his slimy hands."

"You will not speak in that manner about Will nor my daughter. Am I clear?" The shorter man snickered, "Your daughter?! That brat does not carry your blood nor is she deserving of

a position. We could've been the greatest love story ever told."

"Perhaps you have forgotten why we are not."

Franklyn dropped his voice, keeping his eyes on the psychiatrist. His words were chosen cleverly. "I know what you like and I know what you want. Then what happens next is on your conscience. This is your only chance. Give my regards to Will."

Will's classroom

Professor Graham sighed deeply as he rubbed his eyes to ward off the tiredness. He did not physically appear exhausted but his mind was off given the trial had passed yet cannot stir the feeling of being made a target by someone so consumed by jealousy.

The familiar sound of Beverly stowed away the emotions of self doubt for a while. "How was the visit with Chilton? He didn't threaten you or stab you, so what's going on? You've been quiet all morning."

"I spoke with Franklyn directly with no guards."

"You did what?" Will swallowed painfully. The guilt was eating at him. "He agreed to stop and take the deal, but only if I broke up with Hannibal."

"You're not considering it, are you?"

"Hannibal nearly lost his position in the first place because of me."

"You both chose to save Abigail."

"Hannibal sacrificed his reputation so I couldn't suffer and now I have the chance to do the same for him."

"He wouldn't want this. He loves you so much, Will."

"I know. But I'm not the first person he's loved and I won't be the last. Breaking up is gonna hurt like hell, but it's the kind of hurt he can recover from."

"But what about you? Can you recover?" Will didn't speak nor gave his answer. His response was mute.

Shattering the heart of the man who has spellbound him would end everything should he follow Franklyn's demands. He couldn't know full well what may happen. The myth of a broken heart was nothing new. It was said to be a pain worse than death. The loss of one's other half. A fate no darkness can touch. A life in heaven nor hell would not matter. A soul without its love can tip the very balance of the world off course.

No. He will not give in. He's going to fight for what is his. Should he die protecting those he loved, sacrifice himself to ensure no more pain comes to pass, to reunite with him then so be it.

Hannibal's office

The doctor was seated across from a patient. A unique individual with a stellar insight perspective on criminal psychology that surely had put several experts out of commission.

"This is your hour Will. We can discuss whatever subject or current events have entered your life."

"Why does a doctor such as yourself remain intact and professional with others and, yet when I'm in presence, you lower your inhibitions and reveal things you've never spoken of. What is it about me that makes you willingly give your heart to another who is unworthy? Someone who is in the lower class of society. Someone like me? Why are we drawn to each other so strongly that any physical harm done to either of us could be sensed? I feel like it's a question that cannot be explained. What do you believe?"

"We share a connection. Tethered and created long before you and I were born. Do you remember our discussion of an imago?"

"Yes. Our minds and hearts symbiotically are linked metaphorically and also telepathically unified. What we share cannot be destroyed by outside forces. Only I and you have the ability to unlink it, should we choose to part ways."

The doctor nodded slightly. His eyes seem to detect something else. Will was not his usual self since the trial. It grew concerning. "Is there something you wish to tell me?"

The professor moves forward a bit to make sure Hannibal understood his words. "I went to pay Franklyn a visit and see how he was fairing in. Suffice to say, he wanted to speak directly to me. He kept telling me that my feelings towards you were invalid. That I am simply a toy for your own amusement. I didn't believe a word, I did however tell him about the night we consummated our union. How our forms fitted perfectly. How you worshiped, carcass and kiss every single inch of my body, feeling your cock in me. How you and I enjoyed hearing each other lost in bliss and passion."

Hannibal felt curious and a bit aroused upon hearing his mate speak of their encounter in explicit detail. "What became of his response?"

Will smirked, "He was enraged. Mostly in sensing that my aroma had combined with yours but inflamed on the thought of my hands brushing your body. But that is not what worries me."

The atmosphere changed. "Has he made threats?"

"Yes." He said. "He swore to leave us in peace if I..end my relationship with you indefinitely."

"Are you implying we cease our courtship?"

“Of course not. I want you Hannibal and only you. I, just..I-I don’t want to be forced to break up with someone I care about just because of someone else being jealous of what we have.”

“What would you have suggested?” The taller man wiped his thumb across Will’s cheekbone trailing it upward to slowly grip the curls making the shorter man close his eyes in comfort.

The professor’s hand left his side lightly grasping Hannibal’s jaw. The ghost of his breath signified a sweetness that made them both hum in delight of their close proximity. The kiss was soft, nothing like Hannibal imagined what Will’s roughness would be. He allowed his tongue to be pressed into his mouth, tentative, seeking and the doctor bit The proper taste of Will flooded his throat.

The change in Will was immediate. He pressed his lover against the ladder attached to the bookshelf. The professor was pressed firmly against him, canting his knee to feel the arousal. Hannibal let out a low moan to which Will wanted more of. So, he lowered himself onto his knees unbuckling the leather belt, unzipping the expansive pant wear along with the briefs.

To be honest, Will went down on someone before in university. A female he met at a party. She taught him how to pleasure her and it was nice. He’d never done it with a man. He was extremely nervous. Sweat nearly perforated his glasses in being in this new position. He let the tip of his tongue taste the length. He liked it and so he cautiously took it inch by inch feeling just how hot this is.

Hannibal sighed on seeing his mongoose claim what belonged to him. He wondered how a leather collar would look on that snow white skin. He would look exquisite along with other clothing that could enhance his radiance to his level of perfection. The psychiatrist's orgasm peaked just enough for the evidence to land on Will’s decadent mouth. He stands up to let him be handled by hands to press a kiss of sinfulness upon him. He was devoted to him in every way as much his lover had bestowed. The aftermath was a little intimate given that he could not keep his hands off. Hannibal let himself be touched in a similar maneuver he’d done to Will.

“I really was holding back before wasn’t I?” Will asked as he laid his head against Hannibal’s sternum. His slight accent soothed the professor like velvety satin “Are you satisfied?”

“Yes. You and I offered each other an experience we may not have otherwise had.” He lifted his head gazing into those eyes clouded in mystery. He was as secretive as his life. Cryptic and coy were his words. No one with the correct key could unlock him. Until Will arrived into his world like Helios driving his chariot. A physical embodiment of light, beauty and strength encapsulated in one being.

“Do you regret it?”

“No.” Will planted a brush of his lips on Hannibal’s inner wrist on nearly the same exact spot.

Will’s house

The space heater was the only source of light in the entire space. Will didn't mind seeing how his pack seemed to enjoy it. He came home three hours earlier than normal due to how much time his own therapy sessions were of his own volition. His choice to live as he wishes.

He was lying in bed. The sheets lightly scratch his bare arms as opposed to the sweat induced nights he endured during his encephalitis which went undiagnosed. He managed to secure treatment which in turn saved his life before the disease could take him. At the time, he denied for Hannibal to pay for the course but the man insisted on him no longer becoming ill due to him becoming a close friend more albeit a companion he favored above anyone that came before.

The moon outside his window shined exceptionally on this night. He stared at it for a few minutes before the sensation of slumber overtook his body luring him to slumber.

Crime lab, Quantico

Miss Katz was checking the clothing from the first five victims unit to see if there were any bits left behind. None so far as she could tell.

The recent discoveries have a different story. Literature marks on wrists and ankles indicated all of them were bound quite firmly. The bruising patterns were splotches of blue, purple, and red. A tell tell sign of movement.

No signs of organ removal. The cuts were sliced across with a skillful blade. A bit of jaggedness on a few of them meant that whoever did this surely had pressure mounting on them.

A sweep of her gloved hand let two strands of hair fall from one of the female victim's floral dresses. Using her tweezers, she picked it up, holding it to her face and said, "I've got you."

Lexington High School

The final bell rang which had the entire student body exhaling in relief. Mostly for classes to assign schoolwork to be completed. A young woman with dark auburn hair and blue eyes stood by her vehicle gazing out into the crowd.

A deceitful blonde with a knack for bullying? Or a brunette selecting a human toy for badgering?

No one suited her interest. She drove off the grounds and headed to school. Not the one she was taught in but the one that had morphed her.

Harvard University

Boylston Hall

Cambridge MA

The offspring of socialites have to pay a hefty price in wanting their children to be the best. Enroll in some of the top schools, study til dusk to achieve academic success. Few have managed to when it came to a cut-throat environment such as the Top 3.

Abigail certainly would not have imagined taking courses in a school like this. Let alone with her background. Her knowledge had earned improvement for an advisor to pull a few strings allowing Miss Hobbs to attend in order to secure her spot. The admissions committee was blown away by her extensive memory due to her learning by her the family that had taken her in.

The library is quiet. Peaceful. Hardly any movement due to final entrance exams having come and gone like the autumn wind casually swirling outside for a crisp afternoon.

She was reminded of the trial due to wanting to be there but knowing what goes on in criminal cases, it was best she remain aware and not to draw away from her studies. She just hoped this would pass without anyone she loved dying to keep her found family safe.

BSCHI

I gave everything I had to offer. Everything. And it was not enough. It will never be enough. He is nothing like me. I'm more mannered unlike he who does not. He is stealing everything I'be worked so hard to earn.

He is showered while I'm given scraps. He's adored when I'm unloved.

He's handsome and I'm hideous. He has a loving mother and I have an absent hag.

He is introverted and shy. I am loud and smart. He was nothing. I am something.

A small frightened mouse. A conniving lethal jackal

Franklyn thought as he paced back and forth in his cell. His nails clawing, grabbing fistfuls of his hair in a wailing scream ending in hysterical laughter that reverted back until silence sized the halls.

Unknown location

Bodies upon bodies were twisted, arranged and formed to create displays of horror men would possibly vomit uncontrollably at the sight of it. The so-called Chesapeake Ripper should think twice on returning and taking back his crown. For a new king is rising to wear it.

Chapter End Notes

We are almost at the end!

Chapter 17

Chapter Notes

Please respect my work with kindness.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal's house

The main door opened and closed with a soft creak. The stranger entering was a man. A man who knew said host well enough to know the comings and goings of when he appears. He was no ordinary nor temporary 'guest'.

Will tucked the key into his pocket to avoid losing it. He walked into the kitchen to see his boyfriend conjuring up a delectable meal. It wasn't merely the food that caught the professor's attention. Rather, how sinfully attractive he looked while doing it. *How is he even real?*

"For a guy who lives alone, you sure do know to keep guests entertained. They're practically eating right out of your hand. Hungry to see what creations can appease the senses."

The doctor stops and looks up. A smirk graces his lips. *He's happy to see me.* Hannibal could not tear his eyes off of this man. He leaned against the counter, arms crossed and his Henley shirt was unbuttoned to reveal that long pale neck. So well defined, that beautiful collarbone, it had already captivated him of course once before but he never expected to lose control at the mere sight of him.

Hannibal is accustomed to contemplating beauties. It is his recognized hedonism, the pleasure of aesthetics emphasized in forms and figures. He is accustomed, therefore, to feeling delight in physical beauty. The beauty of Will Graham among them: his Botticelli curls, eyes that turn from blue to green, and a jaw that gives masculinity to a particularly lovely face. "I hope I'm not boring you, I started to ramble," and there is that soft laughter, between his teeth, but now he adds something else, his hand up to scratch behind his neck. A gesture that is his damnation.

"A remarkably lean organ, the heart, yet such a potent symbol of life...and the things that make us human. Good and bad, love and ache."

"All of them skewered."

"It is a thematic dish." The music chosen was a favorite of Hannibal's. Light and melodious. Not too outlandish or overbearing.

"My heart certainly feels skewered."

“You have the language to prove it.” Will’s eyes referenced the mark on his neck in plain sight.

“I am metabolizing the experience by composing a new piece of music.”

“Harpsichord or Theremin?”

“Harpsichord. Stravinsky once said a true composer thinks about his unfinished work all the time. He is not always conscious of it, but he is aware when he suddenly knows what he wants.”

“And do you know what you want?” Will inched closer until he stood next to him. The blue buttoned top looked so perfect on him. He could see a few slivers of chest hair peeking out to tempt him. It wouldn’t hurt to sneak a kiss. Perhaps a make out session. However he decided it was best to simmer down the need of physical desire for the sake of not only his relationship, but for those he would lay down his life to protect the most important person he cares about.

The professor leaned into his lover’s neck inhaling the rich slight spice of him. He nuzzled his nose against Hannibal’s, their foreheads brushed together. From a distance, the two men almost formed a heart- like shape. Standing motionless with only their eyes on each other says what they are feeling in this exact moment. The doorbell quietly rung ending the intimacy for now. Will was the one to open the door, seeing it was his mother of all people standing in the doorway with a bottle of wine dressed formally for a dinner. “My boys!” She exclaimed happily, giving Hannibal a well earned embrace that left Will surprised and confused.

The respectable doctor was a bit startled by the affection from anyone other than his beloved or family. “I’m far from an adolescent but I respect your welcome.”

Will then asked as his mother walked towards the dining room. “Would you like a drink?”

“How about a glass from Hannibal’s wine cellar?” And with that, she made her presence known.

“Looks like my mom is on edge. Is that a concern for you?” The doctor shook his head saying, “I enjoy her enthusiasm. Now come along.” gently leading the professor down the hall to enjoy a feast.

BSCHI

Franklyn laid in his cot, hands across his stomach as he stared at the ceiling. The brick walls were cold and gray. It did not stop from pinning and placing photos of Hannibal. Most of them had been withered, bent, collecting dust while others contained color as if taken recently.

“Hello, Franklyn”

“Tobias. What are you doing here? Looks like you brought security with you. Hi, miss Katz.”

“Feeling’s not mutual.”

He snickers. The short stubby stood up on his toes to stretch his neck and see if *he* arrived. *Bummer* .

“Where is he? Is he still chasing that professor?”

The music store owner cocks his head in question. “What professor?”

“If you don’t tell me, I will be very angry.”

Tobias has grown frustrated in seeing him getting the comeuppance but refusing to admit his wrong doings. One that clearly will reach its impending climax. “Do you really think I care?”

“Does he miss me?”

The other man fires back, “He’s moved on. He doesn't think of you ever!”

Franklyn soon collapses holding his head with both hands experiencing some kind of aneurysm attack while Tobias and Beverly watch. It quickly passes and Mr Froidevearux gets up.

“A decade and a half’s a long time to be chasing someone who doesn’t want you, Frankie.”

The ‘cheese man’ stands there in disbelief and bitterness in having to come up with his reasoning as to why he’s intent on ruining an innocent man’s life all because of a minimal chance encounter in his youth that clearly had roots in his current behavior.

“Their bond is sealed. Their hearts mated together. Souls that have crossed paths, lifetimes ripped away from each other by death yet fate offered a second chance for them.”

“Lies. Will does not belong with Hannibal. He doesn't love him. He is worthless. A scrawny bottom feeder of the class system. A man with no taste for the priceless and rare. Undeserving of beauty nor wealth to climb the ranks of society to secure his place in said world.”

“We’re not saying you’re crazy or mentally unstable. We’re concerned you’re pining after a man who has no romantic or physical interest towards you. Listen to Tobias.”

“Miss Katz is right. It can’t be broken. This obsession is clearly overriding your psyche. It’s destroying you. Let it go. Let him be at peace.”

Franklyn in a cold menacing voice quietly said, “No. I will break free of this wretched place. I’ll find him and when I do, I will take him with me. Somewhere where no will ever look.”

“You’ve lost yourself. Desiring to be in a world that is not what it seems. Lusting after a man who does not know you nor will give an opportunity. He is a vessel of something that will never be. Have you not understood it?”

“I will possess him. In time, he will learn to love me. He is mine and always be.”

Hannibal’s house

Delilah knew instantly how lucky her son was even if he himself didn’t. She believed in fate since the day he was born. That was a day she will always treasure. Will was her miracle.

“I admire you, Mrs Graham. The sheer strength of a woman such as yourself to raise your son after your husband’s untimely passing serving his country. I salute in honor of him.”

“Thank you. Will’s father was a gentle soul. He was excited to be a parent. On the day of, he died after a bomb detonated while trying to save a fellow enemy soldier. I went into labor shortly after. It was a long night and when he came into the world...he wasn’t breathing. I pleaded to the doctor and the nurses to save him. His first cry was everything. When I held him in my arms, I knew immediately that my instinct was to protect and love like his father wished he had.”

Hannibal looked to Will, reached out to lock his hand with his granting a gaze of all the silent love he could give. He in return reconciled those emotions. Delilah’s heart filled with sentiment.

“My apologies for asking this question, what was Will like as a child?”

“He was shy. Quiet. He was picked on by others because he didn’t fit in due to his ability. It wasn’t until university that he grew up and blossomed into the type of beauty poets would write sonnets. That only added fuel to the fire of people aggressively harassing Will due to the way he looked. It got so intense that I had to intervene for a period of time. From then on, he’s been doing well due to Beverley and now he has you.”

Hannibal senses a crack of warmth from deep within. He rarely portrayed frailty in front of another human let alone the mother of his dear love. The doctor bowed his head as a sign of respect and sympathy.

The remainder of the dinner was nothing short of small talk amongst acquaintances. Ten minutes passed when Delilah stood by the front entrance to say goodbye and she finally mustered up the courage to say what she felt about her son’s partner.

“I suppose we’ll be seeing more of you.”

“I’d like that. I may have had concerns but seeing you stand by Will, it’s what every mother wants for her child.” Her eyes became slightly glossed due to the emotion. Her voice cracked a bit. “Thank you..for loving my boy.” She gave an embrace to both Hannibal and Will with a love only a mother can give back. Will smiles. Then Delilah says her farewell leaving both the doctor and the professor to smile at each other.

“It seems she is proud that her son has encountered someone who loves him for who he is. As opposed to unrequited love that can oftentimes bring out the absolute worst in humans.”

Hannibal's demeanor changed from dazzling host to charmed significant romantic partner. He guided Will to the study where the professor had no clue what was even happening. Walking over to the extensive bookshelf, he reaches a high shelf to retrieve a cherry oak wood box. The older gentleman hands it to his guest with sincerity in those wise maroon often honey amber irises.

"Lavishing me with gifts beyond imagination is quite a reach. I'm starting to feel like a low paid escort born with a beautiful face who attracts all the high clients. A sugar baby so to speak."

"A fisherman with the simplicity and aura of a full moon and the sun. Eyes like rain with a pure heart. You are no such thing *mylimasis*. Here, you may open it if it is what you wish."

With an inhale, Will lifted the top softly gasping in surprise of the gift bedded within. Lying on a cushion of crimson velvet was a pendent. It was dipped in pure gold. The rich color shined so brightly, it almost blinded him. The symbol was a flower encased in a circle surrounded by sixteen rays. The dark monochrome rope looped perfectly around it in a display of wonder.

He cautiously lifts from its home to gain a proper view with his hands. "What is it?"

"It is a pendent of the Macedonian Star. A royal symbol of Alexander the Great and the empire of Macedon. I found it near a cave in Mykonos when I was a child. There is a message."

Will turns the object over to reveal a short sentence. "The one that holds my heart." He then looks at Dr. Lecter with fondness one only truly in love can reciprocate. He quietly left the home to get a well deserved rest.

When he arrived, his little house on the sea was the only source of light in the near pitch black. Out of the corner of his eye, he spotted a blood red apple sitting in the console of his vehicle. Inspecting it, he took a small bite savoring the sweet tartness. Then something became not quite right. A sour, almost extremely bitter scent permeated his throat causing him to cough violently. The gagging and groaning sounds were faint for anyone to hear his distress.

He collapsed clutching his throat in an attempt to gasp in breaths and ease the pain but there was nothing he could do except fail his arms in a zombie-like movement. His pools of sapphire drifted close as he soon fell into a sleep-like state. A shadow kneels down to inspect him and says, "You see, love always betrays us. You don't even realize how lucky you are never to know heartbreak." And the darkened silhouette dragged the professor's form into a running vehicle and drove away leaving the apple behind in the freshly fallen snow.

Chapter End Notes

I may go on a break soon due to some personal stuff. I don't know when I will be back.

Chapter 18

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Hannibal's home

The faint ring of the doorbell awoke both Abigail and Hannibal from sleep. Both tenants hurried down the stairs in a rush. Upon opening it, they were met with Delilah and Beverly. "Has something happened? Where is Will?"

"He never came home. We found this near his car." Miss Katz held out the apple with a well placed center cut into it with dental markings. "It was injected with a tiny dose of subanesthetic ketamine. There's one more thing the two of you should know, Franklyn escaped the BSCHI."

"How is that possible? The hospital is locked like a fortress. I'm assuming he had help."

"Whoever gave him the ketamine, left this burner phone for you to use." Mrs Graham handed the device to Dr Lecter. "There are two numbers on the contact list. Both using aliases. We have to wait and see who calls."

The loud ringing answered quickly enough for the group to stand aside and allow the doctor to answer.

"I do not know who you are. If you let Will go, I assure you that I have a particular set of skills. Skills that formed into a nightmare for fools like you. I will find you and I will kill you."

"Hello Hannibal, It's nice to hear the voice of my old rival. How have you been? Living like a king I bet. Surrounded by wealth and glory. Remember how you took everything from me?

"Donald, what do you want?"

"What do I want? I want my life back. I could've been you. I'm smarter. I've got more balls and you had it so easy. They should've picked me. That was supposed to be me. Those people owed me, including you."

"I did not 'steal' anything. You sought an alternative to rig an exam and I simply had no choice but to fill in what you could not. If you harm Will, I will make your death insufferable."

"Relax, your royal highness. I haven't laid a finger on your fuck boy..yet. I will give you directions to the address. If law enforcement is called, a bullet ends up in the pretty boy's skull. The clock is ticking. Good luck." Then the call is disconnected leaving the entire group baffled and frightened.

“You shouldn’t go alone Papa. It’s too dangerous, you could get hurt.” Abigail’s eyes saddened with fear understanding what is at risk to bring her father home.

“I know, my dear. I must do this if it means I may not come out alive. Please watch over her Delilah.”

The older woman said “I will.” with a calm and strong tone. Hannibal along with Miss Katz took her vehicle driving off to wherever Sutcliffe was hiding out. The drive was painstakingly long and anxious. He was not the type to express concern over anything. Except now, he was.

After driving for more than forty miles, the phone had begun to ring again. The doctor put the speaker on and answered it. “A not-so-clever game of cat and mouse. It seems the effect of falling from a pedestal that was within reach clearly has undermined your inability to understand the tendencies of extreme narcissism growing within you Donald.”

“I almost forgot how smart you truly are.”

I am quite surprised you remember me at all. Seeing how you almost achieved what I earn and crumbled so far that it formed a hatred within you to destroy what would have been a successful life.”

The neurologist snarled angrily. “Fed with a silver spoon. Given accolades, being invited to events and being the golden boy while I was discarded like a leftover experiment. After being humiliated, I received an offer to work in a field similar to your own. I saw the opportunity to study the human brain, what triggers a person to react in ways that would be classified as dangerous. You know all about mastering the art of deception, don’t you Dr. Lecrer?”

“Is Will alright? Let me speak to him.” There was a slight scuffling sound followed by a clinking of what sounded like chains being hauled. He could hear a low mumble as if the speaker could barely pick up dialogue.

“It looks like your plaything isn’t up for talking. It’s sad really how most of all the people that you bedded, none of them stick around long term to commit to a relationship. I will enjoy waiting.” The second call ended abruptly, leading Miss Katz to look at her best friend’s partner with a look of frustration and anxiety wondering how they were going to find Will if the search keeps going in this direction.

“That guy needs a dose of reality. Here, I thought the good doctor was a saint. I can see why Will is willing to not give up. You know when I first met you, I thought you were the type of man who only cared about himself.”

“What has changed your thoughts?”

“Oh, I still think you are. I just have grown to like that about you.’ The psychiatrist rarely was complimented in his life. Will and Beverly had quite to say about him and he also had grown to like the female agent as someone he could trust. What mattered now was to rescue him and bring him home.

Undisclosed location

A man lied on a cold hard floor. Wrists and ankles were expertly bound to the large rusty metal wooden St Andrews cross. Thin red cuts had stopped bleeding and were beginning to scab. Purple splotches were bruised across his abdomen, back and upper chest. His face was ashen and pale.

Two figures came upon him. One was short and the other was of average height. "You've done quite a bit of damage. Enough to physically heal but not enough to psychically destroy him. You're losing the drive. No matter how much you want to torture him, he will always cast over your shadow. Even if you do kill him, and bury him somewhere, Hannibal will find him and always choose him. It's always going to be. You never stood a chance back then and you never will."

"What do you suggest?"

"You're the one who brought him here, so you decided his fate. I have business to take care of." And with that, the accomplice left his co-conspirator alone with his prey. He walked closer, squatted down to force the semi-unconscious man to look at him.

"I am so sick of people treating you like you're something special. There's nothing special about you. Do you really think Hannibal considers you beautiful? Please. I know he deserves someone better. Someone who knows the ins and outs of his world like the back of a hand. There's only room for one person in his life and that is going to be me. The only thing I have left to do is wait until Hannibal gets here. Once he realizes just how worthless you really are, we will run off together while you die in a shallow grave erased and forgotten."

Will's eyes started to flutter slowly, opening his view up to see Franklyn staring down at him. "What the hell did you do to me?"

"A bit of ketamine and acepromazine to knock you out. Since you prefer animals, I'll treat you like one. It hurts doesn't it? The way it numbs the body to the point of sinking in the ocean."

"Holding someone captive while they're 'dead'. Getting nervous Frankie?"

"I'm very set in my ways and very annoyed at hearing you blabber. Can you just shut up and let me do the talking?"

"Fine. You roll the dice."

"What is it about you that has Hannibal and Beverly wrapped around those little fingers of yours? It's Miss Katz of it all that has me so stumped. Did you two ever..you know?"

"No."

"All that time alone working? You two must have done something to break up the brain-numbing monotony."

"No."

“Strictly platonic? Wow, good for you. It still doesn’t explain how you inspire so much devotion in one man who is supposed to be completely devoted to me. So, why don’t we sit down and have a little heart to heart?”

John Hopkins Hospital

The Mercedes stops behind the building. A place no one has set foot on since it was founded.

Katz turns to Hannibal from the driver’s seat. “Are you sure you wanna do this?”

“It is the only solution to receive answers on Will’s location.” The psychiatrist answers with a voice not of a doctor but as a man. A man who is on a race against time to find his lover before someone else takes it. He exits the vehicle, walking across the pavement and passing through the emergency door with a spare key that miraculously still worked after all this time.

He enters the boiler room. The slight humidity and unnerving sense that it was a setup made to solstice an attack without warning. He realizes it, letting more than a moment sink in before he hears a noise nearby. Hannibal turns and sees Donald. He slams the doctor against the wall.

“Happy reunion.”

Frankly pours himself a glass of bourbon. A bit weak in his case but it does the trick to settle his anticipation. “So, Will. What’s your secret? How did you make Hannibal fall in love with you?”

Will chuckles. “I don’t know what you’re talking about so I honestly have no idea. You can’t think of anyone other than my boyfriend can you?”

The cheese man scoffs, “In case you haven’t noticed him. He’s scorching. I mean you can’t spell Hannibal without ‘hell’. There are lots of people who want him including me but he set his sights on you. Don’t play games with me, dog boy. Answer my questions or I can hurt them out of you. It’s your choice.”

Back at John Hopkins

Donald throws Hannibal against a door. The psychiatrist internally groans in pain at the strength his former classmate acquired over the years he was in exile. “What are you doing?”

He picks him up not caring if he enjoyed it. “Would you believe I’m having a bad day? He then throws Hannibal up on the lockers. He kicks up his leg to press his footed shoe on his neck.

“It started when the board chose you for the scholarship instead of me.” Hannibal manages to throw off Donald’s foot using his leverage to slam him to the ground. He rips off a cabinet

door and swings it against the neurologist's face. Blood spews out as he grabs onto it.

"I deserved it. I have a career but not as brilliant as you do." He swings the door into Hannibal's face, knocking him back a pace.

"You have everything. And it's not because you're a good little boy who deserves success, it's because you stole mine." Donald throws the cabinet at the psychiatrist who ducks as the door lodges into the wall.

"I stole *your* success? You murdered and nearly killed the ones I love all in hopes of becoming better than I."

Hannibal blocks Donald as he runs at him but he twists his arm tossing the psychiatrist into a fire emergency case. The glass in the door shatters as he slums against it. He then struggles on the floor as Donald walks over to pick up a janitor's mop and breaks off the wooden handle.

"I have nothing." He beats Hannibal with the stick. "But I'm about to change that." He kicks him in the jaw causing blood from the blow to ooze from the mouth.

"Incapacitating someone while they are alive. All villains have an ending."

Donald laughs. "*Your* end." He stabs the broken end of the stick into Hannibal's abdomen. He gasps and he struggles against it as his foe digs it in deeper.

**Flashback. Morning after consummation **

Will was nestled in his arms. Content, safe and happy. That was all that he could think of as his lover pushed himself onto his elbows gazing down at him with tenderness.

"You deserve whatever you choose out of life. It is your choice." Hannibal says as he lovingly runs his fingers through Will's hair looking into soft blue green eyes.

The skin to skin contact proved effective as the professor leaned closer to whisper it against his lips. "I chose this. I chose you and that's all I want." He kisses the psychiatrist who passionately returns his affections as they confess their love onto the sheets.

End of flashback

Donald pulls the stick out of Hannibal's abdomen and thrusts his hand hard gripping his neck, choking him. He casually reaches into his pocket in his trousers.

"Bye-Bye, little boy."

He presses the syringe and inserts the needle shoving it into the carotid artery. The neurologist's eyes widen as the concoction seeps into his system and falls next to Hannibal on the floor, unconscious. "Enjoy your prison in Tartarus."

Katz found Dr. Lecter wounded but alive. She kneels down, hauling his body against hers as he keeps his other hand on his abdomen to stop the bleeding. "I've called Jack. They're

coming. We need to get out of here." He nodded, allowing his friend to help him hurry out of the hospital.

She drove as fast she could without garnering attention back to the manor where Will's mother and Abigail awaited. The front door burst open with a thud making the two guests see in shock what occurred. "What happened?" Abigail asked. Her eyes looked at the wound her father sustained. The blood had lessened, grateful he was breathing but worried it would become severely infected if not treated properly. All of them hurried into the kitchen to assess it.

Undisclosed location

"All of this started because you couldn't back down from what was rightfully mine. I saw him *first* ." Franklyn said into Will's ear as he stood from behind. He then notices a pendant dangling from his hostage's neck. He yanks off, ripping it from Will's skin causing him to hiss in pain.

The shorter man inspects it. Bewildered by its ornate beauty and craftsmanship, he turns it over to see a passage engraved on the other side. "The one that owns my heart." He says scoffing before tossing it back to his prey as if it disgusted him. "You don't deserve his love. I do."

"Why do you need him? Huh? You can have anyone that you want, Franklyn. So, why Hannibal? Is it just to piss me off? Or is it because you're insecure that you have no idea what love is?"

"You stupid little whore. Maybe it's because you wouldn't stop sleeping with him. He just kept choosing you over me. Guess, all he wanted was a cheap slut like you! But, what I want to know is..how did you figure it out?"

"You almost killed me!"

He turns to grab something from a nearby table saying, "Then I'm just going to have to do it again." before striking a blow on Will's head making his vision go black.

Chapter End Notes

Nearing the finish line

Chapter 19

Chapter Notes

Po velnių means "fuck" in Lithuanian.

King Nicomedes I was the second king of Bithynia and allegedly rumored to be the male lover of Julius Ceaser.

Dong Xian was a Han dynasty politician whose relationship with Emperor Ai inspired "the passion of the "cut sleeve".

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal's home

The psychiatrist was asleep. Splatters of rain were raging heavily like Neptune raising a storm on the seas. His facial expressions are mostly his eyes fluttering and mouth mumbling incoherently as if he was trying to speak to whomever he was trying to talk with.

He pictured Will lying deceased as the result of arriving too late to save him. Cradling his lifeless form in his arms weeping silently as he curses the heavens and the Devil for taking him away.

The door files open as Simonetta rushed in to comfort her son. Holding him in her arms to soothe the tremors of his nightmare. "Hannibal, wake up. It's all right."

He soon awakes not long after. His eyes came back to their normal shade. He hugged her back, wanting the safe space of someone comforting him. The shaking ceased but still felt in his muscles and bones as if they were trying to tell him something important. "I failed him."

"My son. Will is alive." His mother uttered back as he faced her. "It is the love that you harbor for him that is allowing his heart to beat.. He needs you. Fight for him." She whispered as her son came to the conclusion of her speech.

The doctor carefully stands up looking down to see his wound nearly healed. He senses pain although it wasn't as severe as it was before. He walks carefully to reach over to the closest to retrieve a spare coat. He descended the stairs with his mother following behind walking into the kitchen.

Neither person said a single sentence. Not one word. No vowels. Only their eyes communicated with what needed to be done. All of them agreed to stay behind to avoid causing more worry to the matter except Miss Katz who tagged along since she was the partnering detective while her best friend had been abducted and is being held hostage somewhere.

The second ride itself was no less tense than the first. In fact it was due to time passing by too quickly. He can hear the slow ticking in his subconscious counting down minute by minute on the fate of the man he nearly lost once and will make sure he will not lose him again.

The invisible string connecting their souls began to grow weaker and weaker as the vehicle was beginning to hone on Will's whereabouts. Beverly made a call to Jack and alerted the authorities to not use lights nor sirens when ensuing the arrest in order to avoid spooking their suspect.

The GPS signal beeped as the car slowed to a stop in front of a semi abandoned home. It looks refurbished as if someone had lived there for quite some time. Katz and Lecter removed themselves from the vehicle and began to walk towards the main entrance. Twisting the knob, it creaked creepily until it made impact with a wall. Floorboards squeaked under their shoes as they quietly slithered to a vacant room underneath the staircase.

Beverly pulled the light to reveal a space bigger than anticipated. A hidden 'cabin in the woods'. It was replicated and mimicked to appear and cater to the doctor's good tastes in aesthetics.

From the navy bed sheets, the pillows, the fireplace, to the closet filled with clothing of limitless fabrics and textures suited and embroidered with the initials F.F instead of W.G. What truly ramped up the factor was a custom life size mannequin of the doctor himself dressed in a copycat suit. Hannibal truly felt sick to his core. Physically ill and nauseous to the point of fainting at the feeling of it. "He's crazy. Crazy in love. Like *The Crush* psycho." muttered Katz.

The off adjustment of a door caught the psychiatrist's attention with the officer right behind. He lightly pushed it open to reveal a room of terror. A terror he wished could unsee from his eyes.

Will was bound to an x shaped wooden St Andrews cross. The heavy silver chains embedded into the device were displayed to keep his arms and legs intact. Bruises tainted his moonlit ivory skin in patches and splotches. His clothes were removed leaving the profiler in only his boxers.

The doctor and officer were knocked out to the ground with a round blunt object. Footsteps entered walking across the room to see potential victims. It was Franklyn. He crouched down to see the man incapacitated yet alive despite being hit in the head. "Hello, darling."

"Po velnių" Hannibal muttered under his breath. His nostrils flared in anger.

"So you do have the nerve to be loyal to at least one man. Do you understand that a beauty such as yourself has inspired the imagination of some of the world's most powerful men in history by casting a single glance? King Nicomedes, Dong Xian. They were shells. Beautiful to look at but hollow once penetrated. But me? No one is allowed out once they are in."

He carelessly hauls their bodies before cuffing the wrists with a more efficient set of handcuffs pulling on a gear system. Franklyn positioned them as if they were standing on their feet. The weight of them both nearly strained his fingers in keeping his prey where they

are. “Do you want to see what true betrayal looks like? The way the Dark Ages did to its enemies?”

Beverly really was not enjoying this one little bit. She snapped at him like a dog after a human annoyed it for too long. “The list of victims will be as follows.” He turns to Katz grabbing a pliar looking-contraption. “The breast ripper to be used on your less than stellar chest. When this gets warm, the flesh tears off so easily. It will be a fate worse than if neither you nor the pretty boy had interfered at all.”

Mr Froideveraux gallops over to where Will was still chained. He pulls on a pulley system that allows the cross to be set diagonally causing the profiler to scream in agony. “Oh, don’t worry. I’ll put you out of your misery...eventually.” He leaves the professor for a minute to reach into the fireplace grabbing a poker with a phallic shaped brand before looking at him with lifeless expression. “I bet you were a virgin when you first had sex. Am I right?” He walked over to Graham waving the brand around before centering it in the middle between his legs. ”Too bad that cherry hole of yours always heals and now you won’t like to get it so much. Maybe you’ll enjoy a hot fuck every ten minutes for days on end.” He angrily protests before dropping it with a clang on the cold floor then turns his eyes onto the doctor himself.

“You abandoned me!” He slaps Hannibal across the face quite violently leaving him and the other stunned. “And, now you’re mating with him. Soon, you’re going to feel the pain I felt every time the two of you fucked.” Franklyn grabs a smaller set of pliers hoovering them over Will’s eyes.

“Such a beautiful color. A rare shade among men.” He turns to look at Hannibal then at Will. “I wonder what it would be like without it.” He was just about to slam the instrument right into his irises when the doctor spoke up.

“Why?”

Mr Froidevereaux sighed, “We have intellectual, philosophical and romantic differences.”

“Differences regarding what and whom?”

“Your beauty. It means more to me than it does to him. Will does not appreciate you. Nor does he share your appetite of carnal sensuality. I do. I remade myself into your equal. Just imagine us together.”

The psychiatrist scoffed in retaliation at this crass lucrative statement. He felt displeased. The ‘cheese man’ inches closer and closer with a lighter in his hand. The edges of his thumb lightly grazed the tiny metal wheel ready to ignite the entire room in a fiery blaze.

“It is time. You stand upon the brink of the abyss. Even now it is not too late. I can save you from the flames of this world and the next. Choose me or the fire.”

He spits in his face at the crudeness. The vulgarity of it churned him. It was revolting. Franklyn sneered in anger. The white hot flames of rejection spewed his vision.

“The fear in your eyes.” He looks at Hannibal then at Will. “Do you actually love him?” The doctor twists his wrists cracking open his bindings landing on his feet with the grace of a dancer before harshly grabbing his captor by the neck holding him in place with a gaze of primal instinct.

Katz used a bobby pin to unlock the restraints, rubbing her wrists vigorously to increase blood flow. She walked over to where her ally and captor were having a chat. “Where’s the key?”

Franklyn laughs, not answering the question. Beverly curls her fist and punches him in the face. The sound of broken bone echoed, causing Mr Froideveraux to groan at the pain of being assaulted by a strong woman. A tiny clink hit the floor making the psychiatrist and the officer look down to see a silver iron key at their feet. Miss Katz picked it up and quietly rushed over to free her friend from his prison. The sounds of people entering the room had them look to see Jack, the FBI and Bedelia appear to see if they need rescuing.

Crawford asked, “Where did this guy come from?” His finger pointed to Franklyn then to Hannibal. The doctor with professionalism replied, “A patient harboring a dangerous infatuation with me has resorted to desperate means. In this case kidnapping, homicide and attempted murder of a federal officer.” A group of nameless random officers including Jack cuffed and hauled Mr Frodiverux from the scene leaving the rest of them reeling from the ordeal.

Beverly and Bedelia embraced with all of the emotions coursing through them. The woman, specifically Katz, placed a kiss of reconciliation in her lover’s blonde waves. Her subtle floral scent soothed her body to ease the adrenaline from being held in a dungeon of nightmare.

Both women looked to see Will carefully limping to where Dr Lecter stood. He retrieved a gray blanket to conceal his angel’s state of undress. The tone brought out the color of his eyes in a darker slate. A tiny smile gave on his lips sensing he was there and not a dream.

He vigorously wrapped his arms around him, sighing in relief that he had not died at the hands of a man whose love madness caused his own downfall. Pulling away a bit, Hannibal glanced down to see the sun pendant intact. Not a single splinter. It softly glowed in his presence.

The professor could not hold in the emotions any longer. He kisses Hannibal with everything words could not say. The older gentleman returned the favor albeit with an exact amount of relief and hopefulness to save him from what ultimately could’ve been his death. “You’ve returned to me. I thought you’ve gone from this world. I love you Will.” Hannibal whispered. His words passed through his lips like his prayer had been answered.

The younger man breathed in his scent that had so deeply enthralled him. “To set eyes again upon your heart has lifted this darkness. I vow to not be parted from you. I love you too.”

They could have gone for another kiss if they wanted to. However, they realized they had an audience, not to mention all of them needed to be in hospital to undergo medical evaluations from their ordeal of being held prisoner from a house of hell.

BSCHI

One year later

Franklyn sat crossed legged in his cot in his former cell. The drawings and photos still plastered to the grimy wall. Several new additions were added to his ever growing increasing collection.

The buzzer of the security door made him look up. That sound only caught his attention if a newbie arrived to join the cages. The high sensed faint aroma of a familiar scent alerted his brain. *He's here. God, how I've missed him. I wonder if he misses me.* He preps tidying up walking to the lock to see him. His lips curled into a cheeky smirk at the sight of him.

"Hello Doctor, how I've missed you."

The psychiatrist looked unimpressed in speaking to him. "I'm not the only one who is here to greet you Mr Froidevereaux." He soon steps aside saying "Wouldn't you say my love?" in a tone of casual and bare Franklyn never heard before in all of his former prior sessions.

Mr Graham soon appears at Lecter's side. He was dressed in well pointed shoes, iron pressed dark slacks with a jade green button up topped together with a dark coat in earl gray. "What's wrong Frankie? Shocked to see my pretty face still intact? Guess that's why you have a problem."

He lashes out to scratch him but Will pulls back making him miss the target. He reels himself gathering his composure before insinuating the conversation. "See, I've loved Hannibal since I was eighteen and now he's taken with you. What do you think the overlap is between us?"

"I *do* find it interesting how angry you are. If there's anything Hannibal likes about me, it's my mind, it's that I understand him. You on the other hand perhaps your mind is a bit damaged isn't it? You don't know anything about who he really is."

"You see the good and the bad in him."

Will bites back. "You're just bored and looking for someone to push around. Find someone else to play with. Maybe you can have someone that will put up with you."

"He doesn't care about you, sweetheart. You're just a thing he uses from time to time. That's all."

Hannibal paces his words in order to calm Franklyn's turmoil. "Honestly, Mr Froideveraux.. These petty displays are so far beneath you. Wild scavenger hunts, threats against innocent acquaintances. It casts you in an unflattering light. Will is no rival. Your jealousy is ridiculous."

"Oh, would I didn't have the need for it? You see I may have my own perfections whereas Will here well is an illusion." The doctor frowns in confusion, unsure of what he is implying.

“You presume to know me? Then know this–I will *gladly* end you for what you did to Will. But first, I am going to make you suffer in ways your spoiled little mind cannot possibly fathom. And when it is over, your sweet recollections have been rendered obsolete, you will associate my name with fear and pain, and perhaps the dull realization that you are *nothing* to me.”

Franklyn’s eyes widened in fear and shock, visibly hurt by the venomous lies he was spouting. It quickly changed to a hungry flirtatious demeanor which Hannibal found dare to say annoyed.

“Foreplay has changed in the last millennium. Can Will excite you the way I can? Can he allow you the joy of giving into your most wicked desires? Can he soothe the beast residing in you?”

Mr Graham chuckles as if the questions made him quite chipper than usual. The prisoner then asks sneeringly “What’s so funny, pretty boy? ” as the professor quietly gathers himself before answering Mr Froidevereaux’s question.

“You parade yourself to be a lover of art and culture when you do not. You once had an affair with a professor who ran in the same circle as Dr Lecter yet you grew bored and went on to whomever had a similar background. And purchased gifts that grew dull because it did not line up with what you imagined he would enjoy.”

“I wonder what Molly would believe when she hears what her former flame had been up to.”

Will hummed, continuing, “Molly, I care about her. Hannibal, on the other hand, does not only respect me. He desires me. As a matter of fact early this morning, he granted an intimate performance in the parking lot by demonstrating how he worships me. It was euphoric in knowing I alone can bring the utmost pleasure in him as he too can do the same to me. The sensation of being wanted, of being given equal control unleashes a kind of power that can feel as if I reached paradise.”

Mr Froidevereaux snarled in denial. “Why else would he be drawn to the darkness? Why else is he drawn to you?”

Dr Lecter quietly cleared his throat, answering with a simple sentence. “I trust Will to speak for himself. He and I share a bond that has been forged millennia ago. Century after century we found one another, enduring tragedy one could not imagine. I will not re-announce my feelings nor will he.”

Mr Graham spoke one last time to seal the fate of his enemy. “You’re going to love Florence Supermax. 23-hour lock-down, no visitors, no mail, no phone calls, no human contact for the rest of your life without the possibility of parole.” He walks closer to the bars whispering “Goodbye forever Franklyn.”

The doctor and the professor walked hand in hand out of the ward as they heard the man's shouts, “You used me. You set me up! This isn’t right! It’s not fair!” echoing fading into nothing.

Chapter End Notes

Epilogue left!

Chapter 20

Chapter Notes

> Apologizes for the hiatus. I had some personal things regarding my health but thankfully I am healthy enough to post the final chapter of this magnificent story. Thank you to all who gave this story joy and appreciation. Please respect my work with love and kindness.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Hannibal's cliff house

New Year's Eve

The salty sea air never failed to calm Will as he stood in front of the large glass window overlooking the Atlantic ocean. Filters of the last of the pale winter sun's rays simmer down to give way to night.

Things have changed in the past year. He has not sold his house which raised questions as to why he made that decision. It mostly was due to the fact that there are memories that passed and so many to soon make. His teaching job had stayed the same although with added benefits partially because Crawford retired with his replacement being a bit sympathetic towards the department he taught.

Drops of falling snow made its entrance despite the cold iciness Winter had unleashed upon the mortal realm. The professor's eyes turned to see his significant other with their daughter, the pack along with a new addition to their family.

He was an orphan due to his birth parents having left this world in light of him being born. He was bestowed the name Aeneas.The young man was a combination of both him and Dr Lecter. His dark midnight curls matched Will's while his clothing took after Hannibal. His physical features closely resembled classic renaissance paintings particularly Carvaggio's *Young Sick Bacchus* . His tri-colored eyes gave a sense of seduction. His youthful face dazzled both genders. Awestruck by beauty so rare in the age of modernity, it seemed imaginary that he was a real human and not a fantasy.

His relationship with Hannibal has evolved from nameless acquaintances, platonic close colleagues to a bond of romantic domestic partnership few could dream of achieving.

It had taken a long time for him to be open about his fears as well as his desires of wanting to maintain a relationship, possibly marriage at his age until his golden years which is something he had not thought of prior to the whole roller coaster ride that nearly had him meet Death twice before his time. He did not consider himself a prince nor damsel in distress. He was just an average man. Nothing spectacular about him stood out, one man disagreed in

the guise of a respectable member of society. A pillar of charm, protectiveness and wealth by day but by night Hannibal Lecter devotes himself to unrestrained pleasure.

Will was one of the few who stayed and the only one to lift the mask unveiling a soul who forms breathless creations of timeless wonder and music so vividly rich it could only come from a maestro who traveled to the furthest reaches of Paradise and the chasmic hollowness of Purgatory to obtain such a gift too powerful for a weak mortal to harness.

He hardly imagined he'd be where he is now without the love Hannibal has for him. It once reminded him of a long ago conversation he had with Beverly.

"You like him don't you?" She asked while staring at the psychiatrist then at Will.

The criminal forensics professor scoffed, "What difference does it make if I did."

The woman smirked in catching the unexpected emotional albeit intense sexual awakening in her best friend towards Dr Lecter. "Abigail likes him. What have you got to lose?"

"Beverly, come on. It's not going to happen. Say I do agree and it ends being a disaster that he may not want to see me ever again. I hardly exist so what makes me think I have a chance with him?"

She could see the self consciousness eating at him. The constant silent rejection in his eyes every time someone walks out without explanation. As a friend, it hurt her to see him ignored, even worse picked on and her having to defend him. She wanted Will to be happy. "You are so blind, you don't even see what's actually right in front of you. If you don't break out, you're going to lose him forever."

He sure as hell will be thanking her for the long overdue advice. He is grateful to have a friend like her that has put up with him for years and not ditch. She stood by him as well as Zeller and Price and helped him through dark times.

The presence of Hannibal looming behind him did not frighten Will. The older gentlemen embraced his arms around his mate. The contact made their inner beasts calm in light of the events passed. Will welcomed the comfort of his partner's body. He felt the doctor's lips brush the tip of his ear as he listened.

"Every obstacle you have faced, you did not believe you would overcome yet here you are."

"I think it was my intelligence that got me through my ordeal, what is your prognosis Doctor?"

The psychiatrist hummed, intrigued in answering his darling's peculiar question. "I believe it was the willingness on your part to sacrifice yourself to ensure neither I nor Abigail, nor anyone you've come to care for would be harmed and bring peace in facing your demons."

The professor then nuzzles himself closer to Hannibal. Their gazes lingered on the ocean. Vast endless waves of wild uncharted waters. A symbol of the unknown and rebirth.

Will oftentimes wondered what his past lives were like. How his interactions with Hannibal in each century changed them and how deep their love truly was. His soul being reborn with his memories intact often feeling, witnessing the many deaths of his lover across time. He pleaded and prayed to find him in every lifetime even if it meant he died alone or at the hands of those who believe it to be a sin against nature, against God.

What he feels for Hannibal is something that cannot be described or defined by experts. The bond created thousands of years ago conceived and born out of a connection that was prophesied by the Fates had come true throughout the passage of time. However long it had taken for them to survive, thrive, find and mend the balance. Decades of passion, loss and agony nearly destroyed one last opportunity of reconciliation.

By some godforsaken twist, they were able to locate the other in the last place either expected. Faded memories and tastes of multiple lives playing like a soundless silent film flickered in Will's mind. If he didn't believe in the theme of soulmates and reincarnation when first asked, he would have brushed it off as baseless myths. A product of make believe to amuse children and adults to fantasize their own imagination. If he was asked the same question now, he would likely answer with an entire written dissertation on the subject. Either way, he looked at the idea of finding one's other half as an energetic force that ties people together. No scientific analysis can determine why it happens. It just does.

"*Mylimasis*, you are the reason I have something to fight for. A family."

"*Our* family. Your family is as much a part of me as you are to mine. Even though we do not match society's heteronormative standards, we still are a family."

The criminal forensics professor turned slowly to face his partner's gaze. The slight subtle height difference between them was mostly Will who kind of enjoyed it. Not that it matters, he developed a hidden kink of being the one lavished on and being equal in intimate pleasures.

"I wish to give you everything that you deserve. All the things you believe you do not have the right to own can now be yours."

No matter how strong he thought he was, Will was and is still susceptible to Hannibal's sauve seductive demeanor. His blood rushes with warmth whenever he is close or when his body or hands brushes his skin. His mind lost in pure carnally lustful improper thoughts when he was alone rising in goosebumps simply resisting the urge to touch himself to take the edge off. He hardly was the only man who Hannibal had bedded. "That sounds like a proposal, Doctor. It seems as if you have been practicing."

The older man smiled. A genuinely rare sight. "Indeed. Twas quite close to what I envision but it is a start, is it not?"

Will's lips smirked at the smugness his boyfriend oozed with. He couldn't envision life without him. He'd fallen in love before. This was different. Sure, there was the back and forth tension spewing. The *clear* undertones in how their behavior had the signs of unlikely/possible implications of romanticism despite outright denial from Will during their first meeting, avoiding making eye contact whenever he could.

“Yes. When that day comes, I hope you will still want me.”

“I have before and I always will. When we’ve gone from this life soon scattered among the stars, we will be together.”

“I’m counting on it. This is where I belong. Right here with you. I knew it from the first moment.”

Hannibal answered, “It is enough for me.”

And then they continued into this perfect piece of forever.

FIN

Chapter End Notes

In terms of health I was officially diagnosed with anxiety. Thankfully I was able to seek treatment and I am doing so much better. Be positive and move forward.

End Notes

Please respect my work with love and kindness. Leave a kudo if desired. I will updating one chapter at a time. Stay tune for more!

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!